

Shantideva's
Bodhicaryâvatâra
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་རྫོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།
Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin
Session 44 - Saturday July 2, 2022
Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)

REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS

Lama's Invocation

Short practice of Mental Quiescence – Generation of Bodhicitta

Good morning, everyone.

Today, we resume the study of the 6th chapter of the Bodhicaryâvatâra.

The study of this chapter has been interrupted twice, which certainly is a hidden incentive for us to practice of patience. In that sense it is in line with its topic: "Showing Patience".

Considering the time that has elapsed since our last session, it might be useful to summarize once again the 37 stanzas discussed so far, out of the 134 comprised in this chapter.

- Stanzas 1-10 introduce the subject by emphasizing the need to eliminate anger, the antithesis of Bodhichitta.
- Stanza 11 identifies twenty-four objects to which patience must be applied.
- In stanzas 12 to 21, Shantideva teaches the development of patience in the face of what makes us suffer.
- Stanzas 22 to 33 Shantideva advocates "The patience of gaining certainty as to the ultimate reality of phenomena".
- In stanzas 34 to 51, Shantideva invite us to adopt "The patience to shed light on what is causing harm".

Amongst these 17 chapters, we ended the last session on stanzas 37. We now engage Stanza 38:

Stanza 38:

**When I can't even develop compassion, occasionally,
For those like that, who, with disturbing emotions arisen,
Would proceed to such things as killing themselves,
At least I won't get enraged with them.**

In the absence of generating compassion, one feels heavily caught by hatred or any of the negative emotions that the ego suffers in reaction to situations met in the present moment.

Once such bondage to emotional behaviour has arisen, one can hardly free oneself from such afflictive state. It is similar as being possessed by demons. Once entangled like this, it is hardly possible to regain control over oneself and might even lead to committing suicide.

In this way, Shantideva reflects that when they try to injure others including himself, since he is a Bodhisattva, he should have compassion for them instead. And even if he feels no compassion, what reason does he have to justify reacting angrily? What point is there in being angry?

Stanza 39:

**Even if acting violently toward others
Were the functional nature of childish people,
Still, it'd be as unfitting to get enraged with them
As it would be for resenting fire for its functional nature of burning."**

Looking at ordinary people who behave like foolish children, one might consider asking oneself: Is it their true nature to act foolishly in such way and become inclined to injure others, or not?

If they are, what point is there in being angry with them?

The situation is like being annoyed with fire when we touch it and get burned.

It does not make sense at all!

Stanza 40:

**And even if this fault was momentary instead,
And limited beings were lovely by nature,
Well, still it would be as unfitting to get enraged
As it would be for begrudging the sky for the smoke that was rising in it.**

On the other hand, if these faults of theirs and all their aggressive behaviour were incidental, although their real nature is to be gentle, resentment against them is also totally senseless.

For that would be like someone who gets annoyed when the sky is filled with smoke and then blames the sky, but not the smoke!

Stanza 41:

**Having set aside the actual cause of my pain, a staff, or the like,
If I become enraged with the person who brandished it,
While he, in fact, was incited by anger, he's therefore secondary too.
It would be more fitting to get enraged with his anger.**

When aggressive people intentionally take hold of sticks, stones, or swords and strike us on the body, we usually are angry at those who strike us. However, these attackers are themselves driven by their anger. They have totally lost their self-control.

It would make more sense to be angry first with what truly hurts us, namely, the stick or the stone, and secondly with the anger itself instead of the person who is victim of conflicting emotions.

Stanza 42:

**Previously, I must have inflicted
Such pain on limited beings,
Therefore, it's fitting that harm comes to me,
Who've been a cause of violence toward limited ones.**

Looking into the situation, in the end, all the blame comes back to us.

Paying attention to the law of karma cause and effect, we must know that in our past lives, we were the ones who injured others in the same way that they are injuring us now.

The contrary is pure denial and pretence.

It is only appropriate that, as retribution, we should now suffer the harms perpetrated by others in return for the violence that we inflicted to them in the past.

Stanza 43:

**Both his weapon and my body
Are the causes of my suffering.
Since he drew out a weapon and I a body,
Toward which should I get enraged?**

Their weapons, the cause of injury, and our bodies, the objects injured, are the same in being equally the sources of our suffering. Our enemies drew their weapons to cause us pain, while we held out our bodies to receive it.

Since this is how suffering arises, towards whom should turn our angry feelings?

Since the fault belongs both to us and to someone else, it is incorrect and unfair to begrudge only one of the involved parties. This also should be considered as to adopting a victimising attitude which would be an aggression to oneself.

Stanza 44:

**Blinded by craving, I've grabbed hold of a painful boil
That's shaped like a human and can't bear to be touched,
And so, when it's bruised,
Toward what should I get enraged?**

Our bodies, which are easy to destroy and difficult to sustain, which are composed of substances like blood and lymph, such bodies are like running sores in human form. They are unable to bear the slightest sensation of cold or heat. They crave for food, for clothes, and for the company of a companion.

Yet left to themselves, they are unable to satisfy these needs. It is the mind that must be involved with objects for satisfaction to occur. By itself, the body is as though it was blind.

Therefore, since the body is something that we ourselves have assumed, for whom should we have resentment when pain occurs? We should not be angry with others so much as with ourselves.

Stanza 45:

**Childish me, I don't wish to suffer
And yet I'm obsessed with the cause of my suffering.
Since it's my own fault that I get hurt,
Why have a grudge toward anyone (else)?**

We who are like silly children, shrivel from suffering both now and in the future, and yet we love the things that cause it (such as the acts of killing or stealing, and the other unwholesome actions).

Thus, it is that we injure ourselves by our own wrongdoing. Our pain is self-inflicted. Why should others be the objects of our anger?

We stop here today. Next Saturday, we will conclude this subject, that of "The patience to shed light on what causes harm" with the commentary on stanzas 46 to 51.

Let us practice mental quiescence for a short while, before dedicating the merit of this session for the benefit of all.

