

Shantideva's
Bodhicaryâvatâra
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་རྫོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།
Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin
Session 45 - Saturday July 9, 2022
Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)

REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS

Lama's Invocation

Short practice of Mental Quiescence

Good morning, everyone.

Today, we resume our study of the 6th chapter of the Bodhicaryâvatâra. We left it last week at stanza 45 and read now stanza 46.

Stanza 46:

**It's like, for example, the guards of the joyless realms
And the forest of razor-sharp leaves:
This suffering too is produced by my impulsive karmic behaviour.
So, toward what should I be enraged?**

In the same way that the terrifying gatekeepers of hell and those of the neighbouring hells such as the groves of razor-trees, are the results of our own actions, Shantideva states that all the pain in this and future existences come entirely from of our own making; it is produced by our own deeds. Who else is there to be angry with? Absolutely no one!

Stanza 47:

**Incited by my own karmic behaviour,
Those who hurt me come my way,
And if, by their (actions), these limited beings should fall to the joyless realms,
Surely, wasn't it I who have ruined them?**

Those who injure us, who now come against us to rob us and to ransack our homes, do so summoned by our own evil and aggressive behaviour in the past.

Drawn to us by the actions of stealing and robbery that we ourselves have formerly inflicted upon them, it is now their turn to do us injuries.

Moreover, in due course, the injuries that they inflict upon us, will throw them (thieves and robbers that they are) into the hells of horrendous suffering.

So, are we not the ones who bring ruin upon our foes? The answer is "yes", we are indeed the tormentors of our enemies!

Stanza 48:

**Based on them, my negative karmic force
Is greatly cleansed, because of my patience.
But, based on me, they fall
To the joyless realms, with long-lasting pain.**

But if we are skilled to practice patience toward the enemy who harms us, all our malevolent actions of the past will be cleansed, and a great accumulation of merit will be brought to completion. In this way, we can say that our enemies bring us benefit.

But, because of the harm they do to us, which are the cause and condition of their negative actions, they will have to languish for kalpas in the Hell of Unrelenting Pain. All that for the sake of an aggression that it took only one instant to accomplish. They will have to suffer the long-drawn torments of hell.

Stanza 49:

**Since I'm, in fact, causing harm to them,
And they're the ones who are benefiting me,
Why, unreasonable mind, do you make it the reverse
And get into a rage?**

Therefore, it is we who are their tormentors while it is they, our enemies, who do good to us. For we are able thereby to repay what we owe, to purify our karmic debts and blood hostilities, to complete our accumulations of merit, and to dissipate our obscurations.

Our understanding of what is to be done and what is not to be done is completely overturned!

How vindictive our minds are! What reason do we have for being angry with our enemies?

Stanza 50:

**If I have the advantage of wishing to be patient,
I won't be going to a joyless realm.
But although I'm safeguarding myself in this way,
What happens to them in this matter?**

In view of all this, we might think that if we bring ruin on the enemies that do us harm -a harm on account of which they will be cast down into hell- we will have to go to hell as well.

Yet, it is taught that if we possess the quality of patience in our minds, we will not do so - the implication being that if we are without patience, we will.

Inversely, it could also be argued that our enemies will not go to hell either, since they bring us benefit. But it is the cultivation of patience that saves us from going to hell. On the other hand, what is there that can save our enemies from such a destiny? There is nothing.

Stanza 51:

**And if I were to harm them back instead,
They wouldn't be safeguarded either,
While my (other bodhisattva) behaviour would also decline,
And consequently, those having trials would be lost.**

We may well reflect that, as Bodhisattvas, we are in the wrong if we fail to protect our aggressors.

The reality is that not only we are unable to provide them with adequate protection, but we harm them in retaliation for what they do to us.

Doing so, we give them no protection at all, but we help developing their negative conflicting emotions: the anger and the other negativities in their minds will greatly increase.

Moreover, in turn will ruin our four virtuous disciplines:

- Never to repay abuse with abuse
- Never to be angry in return for anger

- Never to strike back when struck and,
- Never to expose the faults of others when they reveal our own).

As a result, even patience, the best of Bodhisattva austerities, is destroyed.

In this connection, it is said that there are four possible situations in which Bodhisattvas may find themselves:

- They can protect both themselves and others
- They can protect themselves but not others
- They can protect others but not themselves or,
- They can fail to protect either themselves or others.

This concludes the topic of “The patience of making light of what causes harm”. We will end here today

The next topic presented by Lord Shantideva will be that of:

“Cultivating patience towards those who treat us with contempt”

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

