

Shantideva's
Bodhicaryâvatâra
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་རྫོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།
Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin
Session 46 - Saturday July 16, 2022
Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)

REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS

Lama's Invocation

Short practice of Mental Quiescence

Good morning, everyone.

Taking the “Flight of the Garuda” over what was explained so far in the Chapter 6 of the Bodhicaryâvatâra, that expounding the third Paramita of Patience, we note that this chapter is structured around four themes.

We have so far completed the initial two:

1. The removal of anger
2. Identifying the Objects of Patience

We then engaged study of the third:

4. Cultivating Patience

This theme is comprised of 11 topics of which, we completed the first five:

1. Patience about what we do not want
2. Patience about what brings us suffering
3. Patience of accepting suffering
4. Patience that consists in certainty about the ultimate reality of things
5. Patience of making light of what causes harm

The next of the remaining 6 topics presenting this theme will now be engaged:

6. **“Cultivating patience towards those who treat us with contempt”**

This topic is presented through a set of twelve slokas starting Sloka 52.

Stanza 52:

**Because of its being immaterial,
No one can destroy my mind, by any means.
But because of its obsessive involvement with my body,
It's hurt by physical suffering.**

Perhaps we think that we get angry when contemptuous treatment results in injury to our minds or our bodies. But we should remember that our minds—that is, our thoughts—are bodiless; they have no physical form. Therefore no one can in any way destroy them with weapons and other things.

On the other hand, the mind cherishes and clings powerfully to its physical support with the result that we are attached to our bodies and claim them as our own. That is why we suffer when our bodies are attacked and beaten. If there were no clinging to the body, no injury would be felt.

Stanza 53:

**Insults, cruel language,
And defaming words
Don't hurt my body,
So, why, O mind, do you become so enraged?**

It could be argued that when injury is sustained, it is both the mind and the body that suffer.

However, angry looks and other outrages such like invectives when someone accuses us of being a thief, a liar, or an old charlatan, as well as any other defamatory talk behind our backs; all these do not harm the body in the least, and even less does it arm the mind.

So what reason, asks Shantideva, does the mind have for being so resentful? Such an attitude is quite illogical.

Stanza 54:

**Others' dislike for me
That won't devour me,
Either in this life or in any other lifetime.
So why do I find it undesirable?**

It might be thought that, while disrespect and hatred do not directly harm our body and mind, we are hostile to such things because they show us that we are disliked by others.

Nevertheless, the dislike of others cannot truly harm us; it cannot destroy us whether now, nor in the future. Why then is it so hard to accept that others should not like us and show us no respect? We must be able to bear with it.

Stanza 55:

**If I don't wish for it
Because it would hinder my material gain.
Well, though material gains in this life will have to be discarded,
My negative karmic forces will remain secured.**

Perhaps we think that when we are despised, we are disliked and disbelieved by others and that this will be to our material detriment. Such contempt is an obstacle to our well-being, and that is why we can't accept it and become resentful.

Instead, we must consider that however much wealth we accumulate in this life, such as gold, silver, properties and so on, we will have to leave it all behind as we come to die. None of it can be taken with us to the next life.

As the saying goes, we will go forth naked, our empty hands tucked under our armpits; but more than this, it is then that all the negative deeds of argumentativeness and belligerence that we perpetrated in the past for the sake of material gain, will stay with us as steady company. They will not be removed by death, and we will have to bear the consequences.

Stanza 56:

**Death today would in fact be better for me
Than long life through an improper livelihood.
For even having lived a long time, there will still
Be the suffering of death for someone like me.**

Perhaps it will be argued that if we are without possessions, we will have no food or clothing and will soon die. It is because we do not want this that we get angry when others treat us with contempt.

But as Shantideva says, it is better for us to die now, this very day, than to live a long life sustained by wrong livelihood. For it is taught that, if there is a choice between a long but evil life or death this very day, death today is the better option.

The sutras define wrong livelihood in terms of all kinds of clinging to the objects of the six senses. The Ratnavali stipulates that wrong livelihood is to be summarized under five headings:

1. It is an attempt to secure a living by flattery,
2. hypocrisy i.e., pretending to be a good practitioner
3. Self-interested generosity,
4. putting forward one's status or position as being a person worthy of support, and,
5. indirect theft such as pretending that one has nothing to call for support.

Perhaps we will think that since we want to live, it is better not to die today. But however long our or anybody else's life may be, the pain of death will finally come, and no-one can escape it. So, it is better to die now than live a long life sustained by evil means.

Indeed, if an extremely wicked person has a long life, his or her suffering will be far greater when the time of death arrives. Death today would be far preferable.

Stanza 57:

**Someone who wakes up after having experienced
A hundred years of happiness in a dream
And another who wakes up after having experienced
Just a moment of happiness:**

We can look at the following example: One man may have a dream, and in his dream, he may think that he lives a hundred years filled with the pleasures of the five senses. But then he wakes up.

Another man may think in his dream that he has experienced these pleasures for only an instant, and then he too wakes up. When they wake, the happiness that both have felt in enjoying such pleasures whether it seemed short or long—will not return for either of them.

We will stop here today. Out of the 12 stanzas presenting this topic, we completed the first half. Next week we will complete the subject of **“Cultivating patience towards those who treat us with contempt”**, moving on to another subject, that of **“Cultivating patience toward those who ill-treat our loved ones”**.

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

