

Shantideva's
Bodhicaryâvatâra
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་རྫོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།
Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin
Session 47 - Saturday July 23, 2022
Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)

REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS

Lama's Invocation

Short practice of Mental Quiescence

Good morning, everyone.

It is for me a great joy to meet again to resume our study of the Bodhicaryâvatâra. We are currently in the process of learning the importance of:

"Cultivate patience towards those who treat us with contempt"

This subject is presented through a set of twelve stanzas of which we have seen the first six. We are now approaching the stanza 58.

Stanza 58:

**Once they've awakened, that happiness
Doesn't return, after all, to either of the two.
Similarly, it just comes down to the same
For someone who's lived for long and someone who's lived for a short while.**

In the same way, whether we have lived a long and enjoyable life or whether we have lived only a short while without much joy, when the time of death comes about, the happiness is over, whether short or long, just like someone waking from a dream.

The happiness that we have previously felt will never return and no further experience of it will be feasible. There is only the pain of death, irrespective whether life has been short or long.

Stanza 59:

**Though I may have obtained great material gain
And even have enjoyed many pleasures for long,
I shall still go forth empty-handed and naked,
Like having been robbed by a thief.**

We may be rich in worldly goods such as properties, gold and silver, or silken clothes; we may delight for many a long year in the pleasures of the senses made possible by our possessions.

But when tomorrow we die, ruined, and stripped as though by thieves, we must go forth naked and empty-handed into our next life.

No matter how much we possessed riches, food, clothes, and friends, whatever companions may be ours—retinues of monks, students, or subjects—we can take none of them with us when we die. We must go forth alone.

Stanza 60:

**Suppose I said, “While living off my material gain,
I’d consume my negative karmic force and do positive things.”**

Well, if for the sake of material gain, I became enraged,

Won’t my positive karmic force be consumed, and negative karmic force come about?

Once again, it could be argued that if we are rich, we are likely to live for a long time and not die. And by making offerings and charitable donations, such as having sacred images painted, creating representations of the Buddha’s body, speech, and mind; or by making prostrations and circumambulations, and so on, we will purify our negative karma and will accumulate much merit.

It is for this reason, we convince ourselves, that we are irritated when we encounter hindrances to our various wholesome activities. But if we are exasperated by what prevents us from getting what we want, doesn’t this mean that all our merit will be dissipated and a great evil produced?

Remember that one instant of anger or hatred destroys merit accumulated during a thousand kalpas!

Stanza 61:

If the very purpose for which I am living

Should fall apart,

What use is there with a life

Committing only negative deeds?

In that case, what use will our lives have been when the only real reason for living—the purification of evil and the accumulation of merit—has been ruined; when merit has been exhausted and there has been a great increase in negativity?

What is the point in living such a life? What point is there in avoiding death when evil is the only consequence? Surely there isn’t any reason at all.

Stanza 62:

Well, suppose I said, “Rage for someone who maligns me

Is because it makes limited beings lose their trust.”

Well then, why don’t you get similarly enraged

With someone defaming someone else?

It could be objected that if we patiently put up with all kinds of unpleasant speech, other people will entertain wrong ideas about us and will criticize us. And since we are Bodhisattvas, they will destroy their own merit and throw themselves into the lower realms.

It is for this reason, we tell ourselves, that we resent their unpleasant speech. But how is it that we do not hate the same kind of unpleasant talk, criticism, and wrong thoughts when they are directed at others, even sublime beings superior to us? We should find it unbearable!

Stanza 63:

If you can tolerate distrust when it’s for someone else,

Because that lack of trust depends on other things.

Then why not be patient with someone who maligns me,

Since that’s dependent on disturbing emotions arising?

Perhaps we will claim that we are not upset when unpleasant words are addressed to others because those who say such things do so because they have lost faith due to the apparent misbehaviour of the people they criticise although these may even be sublime beings.

It is because of the latter that the situation has arisen. But if this is the case, why is it that we are impatient when they insult us? We must come to understand that when such people say unpleasant things, it is dependent on the arising in them of negative emotions, and they have no control over it.

Therefore, we ought to bear with it. In short, when others dislike us, when they create obstacles to our success, when they insult us to our face or slander us behind our backs, we should take pleasure in cultivating patience.

This concludes the current topic. The next topic presented by Shantideva in this chapter will be that of:
“Cultivating patience toward those who ill-treat our loved ones”.

We will stop here for today.

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

