

Shantideva's
Bodhicaryâvatâra

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་སློབ་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།

Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin

Session 50 - Saturday August 20, 2022

Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)

REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS

Lama's Invocation

Short practice of Mental Quiescence

Tashi Deleg! Welcome to each one of you as we meet again to pursue our group study of the Bodhicaryâvatâra.

Resuming our study of the Chapter 6 teaching the higher practice of Patience, we concluded the topic of "Cultivating patience toward those who ill-treat our loved ones" and engage now the next topic, "**Cultivating patience when people do good to our enemies**".

This topic covers stanzas 76 to 86.

Stanza 76:

If others obtain the pleasure of joy

From praising someone I dislike, who nevertheless possesses good qualities,

Why, O mind, don't you make yourself joyous like this,

By praising him too?

When others speak well of the rivals who tease his jealousy, or praise the qualities of the enemies he dislikes; and moreover when, doing so, they experience a certain mental gratification; why, questions Shantideva, does his mind not take pleasure in praising them too?

Instead, he is reacting by speaking with resentment!

He should rather be happy; bitterness is totally out of place or a Bodhisattva.

Stanza 77:

That pleasure of joy of yours would be

An arising of pleasure that was not disgraceful,

Something permitted by the Ones with Good Qualities,

And superlative, as well, for gathering others.

Those who praise their enemies and rivals possess a state of mind that is happy and joyful. Indeed, the mental pleasure that derives from praising one's enemies is most refined; unlike that which by comes from indulging in the pleasures of the senses such as eating meat, drinking alcohol, and indulge contact with a sexual partner.

The late type of pleasure is the very source of suffering in this and future lives and is therefore seriously inadequate. For that reason, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, endowed with every excellence, have denounced, and forbidden it like poison. Indulging in pleasures which relies on nothing else than conflicting emotions, creates conflicts between beings and drives them apart.

On the other hand, the pleasure that derives from praising one's enemies, has four beneficial qualities, which are the reverse of the previous defects. These can be described as follows:

1. First, it is the source of all happiness in this and future lives.
2. Second, it is not negative but virtuous, for it is a source of unbounded happiness and rejoicing.
3. Third, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, who are endowed with perfect qualities, do not forbid it but recommend its steady practice.
4. Finally, it is the most perfect way of winning people over, because praise that is joyous and without jealousy is the best kind of pleasant speech. So was it illustrated by Dromtönpa when he praised the qualities of Lama Khuwa(*).

(*) I have not been able to identify this Lama Khuwa, yet I perceive him to have been a Lama envying Gyalwang Dromtönpa who became the sole depository of the three branches of the “*Lam Rim*” transmission from Atisha.

Stanza 78:

**If you wouldn't like this pleasure of his,
 "Such pleasure as that would be only his!"
 Then, from stopping as well giving wages and the like,
 Your ruin will come, both seen and unseen.**

If, owing to jealousy, we do not want such a pleasure, thinking that if we praise others, including the people we do not like, they will be the ones to experience happiness and contentment, we should also give up remunerating our servants, since their wages make them happy.

However, we will certainly be the loser both now and in the future. For in the present life the work will not be done, and in the next we will not be able to enjoy the fruits of generosity.

Stanza 79:

**When your own good qualities are being extolled,
 You wish others, as well, to take pleasure.
 But when others' good qualities are being extolled,
 You don't wish yourself to take pleasure too.**

In other words, our perception of what is to be done and what is not to be done is corrupted and our behaviour is completely upside-down, driving us away from our main goal to achieve enlightenment!

Including those we dislike, when others see and hear that our qualities are being praised, we enthusiastically expect that everyone should rejoice in the homage.

But when the compliments are paid to our enemies, we are unwilling to enjoy the celebration by joining in their praise, for we are afraid that they will be made happy by it.

Stanza 80:

**Having developed a bodhicitta aim
 Through wishing for happiness for all unawaken beings,
 Then why do you become angry instead
 At the happiness that limited beings have found by themselves?**

We have cultivated the attitude of mind that is oriented toward enlightenment, wishing to establish the infinite multitude of beings in the unsurpassable happiness of Buddhahood. If now we find that, without needing our help, beings gain for themselves some slight contentment in the way of clothing and sustenance, why should we resent it? It is quite improper to be displeased and annoyed.

Stanza 81:

**Having given your word that you wish sentient beings
 To have Buddhahood, honoured throughout the three realms,
 Then why, when seeing them merely shown miserable respect,
 Do you burn up inside at it?**

We have cultivated Bodhichitta, wishing that beings attain enlightenment. By doing so, we become objects of veneration for the sentient beings of the three worlds.

Why should we find ourselves in a torment of resentment when petty marks of favours (to say nothing of veneration) come their way? How is it that we are unable to accept this? Such a situation is wholly out of place.

Stanza 82:

**If there were someone needing care
Who's to be cared for by you and provided for by you,
And that family member was to get something to live on,
Wouldn't you be delighted, or would you be enraged in return?**

Take the example of our dependents, our parents or relatives who rely on us and whom we have the constant duty to support, providing them with food and clothing.

Should it happen that they find a means of livelihood for themselves, will we not be happy? Will we once again be resentful? Such attitude would not at all make any sense.

Stanza 83:

**How could someone who doesn't want even that for wandering beings
Be anyone who wishes for them to be Buddhas?
Where is there Bodhichitta in someone
Who becomes enraged at others' gain?**

To be sure, if we do not want even such insignificant favours to be enjoyed by others, are we not full of pretence when we say that we want Buddhahood for them?

How can anyone have Bodhichitta i.e., the attitude of mind that is oriented towards the enlightenment of all, and at the same time bitterly dislike the temporal and spiritual benefits that others may enjoy?

It is perfectly clear that such a person possesses no Bodhichitta at all!

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.

