

**Shantideva's**  
**Bodhicaryâvatâra**

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་སྣོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།

Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin

Session 53 - Saturday November 05, 2022

**Chapter SIX: Showing Patience (Continued)**

**REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS**

**Lama's Invocation of the Buddhas and assembly of lineage holders.**

**Short practice of Mental Quiescence – Further generation of Bodhicitta**

Tashi Deleg!

Pursuing our study of the chapter of Patience presented in the Bodhicaryâvatâra by Shantideva, we will now continue and complete the presentation started last week of the topic on

**“Cultivating patience with those who obstruct what we and our friends desire”.**

This subject is treated throughout stanzas 90 to 111. We now read Stanza 102.

**Stanza 102:**

**“But this one is impeding my positive practices!”**

**Still, it's unfitting to be enraged with him.**

**There isn't any trial that's equal to patience,**

**So, shouldn't I be staying just close to that?**

We should not be irritated, claiming for example that someone hinders our Dharma practice by taking our possessions, and be an obstacle to our virtuous activities, such as contributing to the creation of the Buddhas representations of body, speech, and mind.

Nor is it valid to consider that they will hinder us from making offerings and distributing alms or from practicing meditation in retreat.

Since patience is the supreme and matchless virtue, how can we not devote ourselves to it?

Indeed, if we wish for virtue and merit, we should abide in patience.

**Stanza 103:**

**If, in fact, it's through my own fault**

**That I'm not acting patiently here,**

**Then while a cause for positive practice is abiding nearby,**

**It's actually me, who's causing the impediment here.**

If, through our own drawbacks of anger, jealousy, and so on, it is our enemies that constitute the very causes of our patience: the opportunity to gather supreme merit and virtue.

Would we fail to practice restraint towards those who harm us and impede our welfare and good reputation, we are undeniably hampering ourselves.

**Stanza 104:**

**If there were something that wouldn't come about if something were absent,**

**But would also be present if something were present,**

**That very thing would be the cause of that,**

**So how can it be said that it's an impediment to it?**

In the absence of harm-doers, patience does not arise. It appears only in the presence of those who confront us. The definite cause for the practice of patience is indeed our foes.

It does not make sense, for the former is the cause of the latter. It is the absence of the enemy that prevents patience from appearing.

**Stanza 105:**

**There's no impediment to giving caused by a mendicant monk  
Gone out for alms at the proper time.  
And it can't be said that the coming of someone conferring vows  
Is an impediment for becoming a monastic.**

If beggars arrive asking for alms just at the time when alms are being distributed, they in fact, facilitate the practice of generosity. Since they do not hinder it in the slightest way, how can they be regarded as the source of hindrances?

In the same way, says Kenchen Kunzang Palden, for someone who wants to receive the monastic vows, it would be incongruous to say that the abbots and monks are impediments to the ordination. For they themselves constitute the right conditions for receiving the vows.

**Stanza 106:**

**Alms-seekers are plentiful in this life,  
But scarce are those who cause me harm,  
Because no one will cause me harm  
If I haven't harmed them like this in past lives.**

In this present time of decline and degeneration of Kaliyuga, the poor -who support our generosity-, can be found everywhere. On the other hand, the abbots and monks who bestow ordination are few. And even rarer are those who challenge our patience.

The reason for this is that Bodhisattvas do not injure beings in the slightest way, but only help them. Consequently, the latter cease to be aggressive. As soon as they encounter Bodhisattvas, malicious beings become loving and respectful. Their violent thoughts and behaviour subside.

For example, both deer and hounds listened to Dharma in the presence of the venerable Mila, and wolves and sheep played happily together in front of Ngulchu Thogme Zangpo.

**Stanza 107:**

**Therefore, I shall be delighted with an enemy  
Who's popped up like a treasure in my house,  
Without having had to be acquired with fatigue,  
Since he becomes my aide for bodhisattva behaviour.**

The causes for practicing patience, cultivating virtue, and collecting the supreme merit that it brings, are extremely rare.

Therefore, just like an indigent is overcome with joy on discovering without effort an inexhaustible treasure of food and clothing in his own house, likewise, the best of Bodhisattva practices -joy-, must be the only reaction when we come upon such extreme rarity of meeting an obstacle maker, our support for patience.

We ought to be like Serkhangpa, the great lama who revealed that his teacher was Nyathubten, a thief who had robbed him of every of his possessions. From then on, Serkhangpa abandoned his monastic rank to become a yogi free from all worldliness.

**Stanza 108:**

**It's because of its having been actualized through this one and me having met  
That a fruit of patience comes about.  
So, let me award it first to him,  
For he was, like this, the earlier cause of my patience.**

If we have no one against us, patience cannot arise in our minds. Consequently, we have brought forth patience thanks to the people who harm us and whom we dislike.

it is therefore appropriate that we offer them its first fruits since they have indeed been the cause of it.

**Stanza 109:**

**Suppose I said, "But he had no intention for me to actualize patience,  
So this enemy isn't someone to be honoured."  
Well, how is it that the hallowed Dharma is honoured  
As suited to be a cause for actualizing it?**

And if we think that such offerings are not due to our enemies because they never had the conscious intent to engender patience in our minds, why, by the same token, should we make offerings to the sacred Dharma as being the proper cause for the accomplishment of great virtue in our mind stream?

We shouldn't because the sublime Dharma never consciously intends to induce us to virtue.

**Stanza 110:**

**Suppose I said, "But this enemy's intention was to cause me harm,  
So, he can't be honoured."  
Well, how could patience be actualized by me  
If, like a doctor, he was intent on my benefit?**

We may protest such a conclusion, saying that the sublime Dharma is without malevolence, whereas our enemies conspired to do us harm and are therefore unworthy of any recompense.

But if our enemies were like good doctors and, without malevolence, tried only to benefit us and make us happy, how could we possibly have developed patience? It would not have been feasible, for there would have been no agent for it.

**Stanza 111:**

**Therefore, since patience arises dependently  
From his vicious intention,  
This one himself is fit to be honoured like the hallowed Dharma,  
Because he's a cause of my patience.**

Therefore, all those unpleasant people who stay close by to invalidate whatever praise is given to us -together with all veneration, good reputation, and prosperity-, are surely there to guard us from falling in the hells or the other realms of sorrow.

For praise is indeed something to which we get attached. Rather than being angry with such people, we should be grateful to them for their kindness and the good they do to us.

Following these lengthy explanations of the various aspects involved in the practice of Patience, -should we engage it on the level of Prajñāparamita leading to enlightenment-, Shantideva points out that it further must induce the cultivation of "Respect for beings".

This will be done through three subtopics, which we will study during the coming three sessions:

- Practicing respect for beings, considering them as the field of merit (verses 112–118)
- Practicing respect for beings with the wish to rejoice the Buddhas (verses 119–127)
- Practicing respect for beings, thinking of the consequences of the good and evil done to them (verses 128–134)

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.

