

DHARMA ESSENTIALS, COURSE XI
GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE, PART II
Class One Outline

Class One

- I. Introduction to the Dharma Essentials Series and to this Course
- II. Root Text and Commentary
 - A. *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Bodhicaryavatara)*, by Master Shantideva (ca. 700 A.D.)
 - B. *Entry Point for the Children of the Victorious Buddhas*, by Gyaltsab Je, Darma Rinchen (1364-1432)
- III. Review of First Five Chapters of the *Guide*
 - A. Subjects covered:
 1. The Wish for Enlightenment
 2. Obstacles to obtaining the wish and how to overcome and purify them
 - B. Overview of the six perfections
 1. Giving
 2. Ethical Living
 3. Patience
 4. Joyful Effort
 5. Meditation
 6. Wisdom
 - C. The real meaning of the perfections of giving and ethical living
- IV. Introduction to Chapter Six and the Perfection of Patience
 - A. What's wrong with anger?
 1. Problems we can see directly
 2. Problems we cannot see directly

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IV. Introduction to Chapter Six and the Perfection of Patience, cont.

B. Feeling Upset and How to Avoid It.

V. The Possibility of Developing Patience

A. Habituating yourself to patience

B. Patience as a state of mind that can be developed

VI. Three Types of Patience

A. The patience which takes on suffering willingly

B. The patience where you concentrate on the Dharma

C. The patience where you don't mind it if others do you harm

VII. Meditation Assignment

Spend fifteen minutes each day on the disadvantages of anger and the advantages of patience. Be specific in terms of your own life: how has and does anger been a destructive force in your relationships and how could patience increase the happiness of your life and the success of your relationships?

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Class Two Outline

Class Two

- I. Who's Responsible for My Anger?
 - A. Is anger premeditated?
 - B. Did a creator god make irritating people in my life?
 - C. Do irritating people appear in our lives randomly, without any cause at all?
 - D. The role of karma and perception in identifying the true cause of irritating people and objects
- II. Not Getting Angry at those who Harm us Physically
 - A. Where do bodies which suffer come from?
- III. Not Getting Angry at those who Harm us Verbally
 - A. The mind is not physical and cannot be harmed
- IV. Not Getting Angry at those who Harm our Teachers and Holy Ones
 - A. Holy Ones cannot really be harmed
 - B. If Teachers and Holy Ones are harmed, who's really responsible for that?
- V. Four Reasons to Feel Happiness for the Successes of Enemies
 - 1. In the short run, I can feel the same happiness they feel.
 - 2. Karmically, I will be happier in the future.
 - 3. My positive attitude towards the success of others will attract others to the Dharma.
 - 4. The karma of being unhappy with others' successes is so bad that I will not feel any happiness myself in the future.

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VI. Four Reasons not to Feel Happiness for Misfortunes which Befall our Enemies

1. It doesn't benefit you in the slightest.
2. You can't take credit for it anyway.
3. Karmically, being happy about someone else's problems is the best way to ruin your own happiness.
4. The karmic result of feeling happy about someone else's problems could be a rebirth in the hell realms.

VII. Why We Should Cherish the Irritating People in our Lives

VIII. Why Other Living Beings should be Treated as Equal to the Holy Beings and Teachers

IX. Meditation Assignment

Spend fifteen minutes each day on the real sources of the irritating people and situations in your life, and how best to insure that they will stop appearing in your life in the future.

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Class Three Outline

Class Three

I. The Fourth Perfection: Joyful Effort

A. The definition of joyful effort

II. Three Things that Act Against the Perfection of Joyful Effort

1. Laziness
2. Attraction to improper activities
3. Feelings of being discouraged

III. Laziness and How to Overcome It

A. Factors that promote laziness

1. Sloth
2. Craving for sleep
3. Lack of disgust for this suffering life

B. The metaphor of the oxen and the butcher

IV. Overcoming Discouragement

A. The existence and meaning of the “Buddha Nature” within us

V. Becoming Accustomed to Great Bodhisattva Deeds. . . Gradually

VI. What Causes Pain?

- A. Belief in a self-existent “me” or “mine”
- B. Hurting any living being

VII. Confidence and the Extraordinary Sense of Personal Responsibility for the Suffering of Others

- A. Persevering even when others are not grateful
- B. Persevering even when no one helps you
- C. The metaphor of the razor and honey

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Class Three Outline

VIII. Joyful Effort, Watchfulness, and Meditation

A. How the development of joyful effort leads to the next perfection

B. Our capability for extraordinary effort and concentration

IX. Meditation Assignment

Spend fifteen minutes each day on your own obstacles to joyful effort and how you will overcome them.

DHARMA ESSENTIALS, COURSE XI
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Class Four Outline

Class Four

- I. The Fifth Perfection: Meditation
 - A. The definition of meditation
 - B. The necessity of developing meditation in order to directly perceive the true nature of things through the union of meditative quietude and insight
- II. The Five Obstacles to Meditation according to Arya Nagarjuna
 1. Restless desire and missing a person or thing
 2. Feelings of malice
 3. Drowsiness and dullness
 4. Attraction to the sense objects
 5. Unresolved bad doubts
- III. What to Meditate On? The Practice of Exchanging Self and Others
 - A. Learning to treat others and yourself exactly the same
- IV. Objections to the Practice and Answers to the Objections
 - A. "Their pain isn't my pain."
 - B. The definition of "me" as purely conceptual and arbitrary and can be conceptualized differently to include others
 - C. We already take care of others like ourselves when we act now to avoid suffering to our future selves
 - D. How "I" exist, how "I" don't exist, and how "I" could be expanded to include "you" and all other beings
 1. The collection of the parts of a person
 2. The stream of a person through time

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- V. The Sources of All Pain and Happiness in the World
- VI. Self-Cherishing: The Greatest Demon of All
- VII. Living a Life of Service to Others
- VIII. Meditation Assignment

Spend fifteen minutes each day on the true sources of all pain and happiness in the world, and how you can maximize your own happiness and minimize your own suffering by caring for others