

**Transcript of the teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi on
*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds, 2014***

Root text: *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* by Shantideva, translated by Toh Sze Gee. Copyright: Toh Sze Gee, 2006; Revised edition, 2014.

Lesson 33**12 June 2014****CHAPTER SIX: VERSES 6.22 - 6.31.**

B. Cultivating the patience that is intent on Dharma

1. Extensive explanation

A. As both fury and the one who is furious, etc. rely upon causes, they are not independent (V. 6.22 – V. 6.26)

B. Refuting the existence of independent causes (V. 6.27 – 6.31)

The teachings tell us it is a quality of our mind that it follows whatever it is habituated with, i.e., whatever the mind is familiar with, that particular object or activity is more easily comprehended and understood. Basically we find it easier to do things that we are familiar with.

In the last lesson, we saw how the teachings tell us that we have to be patient with and tolerate small problems and suffering. By getting accustomed to putting up and being tolerant with them, gradually we are able to put up with and tolerate bigger problems and difficulties.

The discussion here is in the context of practising the Dharma. Why are we practising the Dharma? The purpose of practising the Dharma is to enable us to subdue the afflictions in our own continuum. So practising the Dharma means going to war against the afflictions with the goal of vanquishing them. We have to understand that in the process of doing this, we will experience many challenges and difficulties. It is at those times that we have to put up with and be tolerant of challenges and difficulties.

We have to cultivate the patience that voluntarily accepts suffering and the problems we meet. Having said this, we must know how to do this. When we say that we have to put up with problems and difficulties, that we have to tolerate unpleasant situations, it does not mean that we do nothing when there is a problem. This is not what it means. We must know how to deal with the situation and we must know how to be patient. So this involves thinking.

For example, when we meet with difficulties, suffering, problems and challenges, we should remind ourselves that whatever problems or suffering we are experiencing are the results of our own non-virtue (or negative karma) that we had accumulated in the past. The experience of the problems and suffering we are going through is like a broom that sweeps away all the negativities and obscurations. This is how we can think. Thinking of such a reason, we accept the situation voluntarily.

We should also remind ourselves of the benefit of that experience of the problems because without any problems or suffering, we will not look for a solution to such suffering. We will not remember virtue. We will not practise virtue. When there are problems and when there is suffering, the problems and suffering persuade us to look for a solution, that is, they persuade us to engage in virtue and they also persuade us to think of the future, our next life.

Yes we have to be tolerant. We have to put up with the difficulties, problems and suffering that we meet but we must know how to do so. Being tolerant in this context does not mean just accepting the situation, “Oh, it doesn’t matter.”

There are people who are like that. They misunderstand and think, “I should just accept it.” But actually they are not really accepting the situation because deep down inside, more and more unhappiness is being accumulated. Then there comes the time when it all boils over and they explode. They get even more upset. There are people like that. That is *not* practising patience. Many people have such a wrong understanding of the meaning of patience. They think that practicing patience means to just keep quiet and accept things. But actually they are not accepting things because deep down, their minds are still disturbed.

Practising patience does not lead to a disturbed mind. Practising patience means you look at the situation and deal with it, without disturbing your mind. When you deal with a situation, you think about it from various angles. The whole point of the exercise is to be able to deal with a situation and yet at the same time inside, you do not get disturbed. This is patience.

Verse 6.19 a,b

Even when those who are skilled are suffering,
Their minds remain very lucid and undefiled.

This is what patience is. When there is a problem, deep down, the minds of such practitioners are still clear and undisturbed. In fact, the really capable and “skilled” ones are those who feel happy and joyful even in the midst of a crisis or difficulties.

Next is cultivating the patience that is intent on the Dharma. Essentially this section discusses how those people who are angry at us do so without any control or without any independence.

B. CULTIVATING THE PATIENCE THAT IS INTENT ON DHARMA

1. Extensive explanation

A. As both fury and the one who is furious, etc. rely upon causes, they are not independent

1. Neither fury nor the furious person is independent

A. The reasons why it is unreasonable to be furious with an afflicted person

First there is an explanation of why it is inappropriate for us to be upset with the person who is harming us.

When one falls sick, most people can accept this including ourselves. We do not blame anyone else when we fall sick and feel discomfort. We put up with it. But if there is somebody causing us problems, then we cannot put up with it. In fact, we do not want to put up with it.

When we look at our sickness, we understand that we have no control over it as the sickness just happens. But with respect to the person who is harming us, we think, “He is doing it on purpose. The reason for his whole existence is to destroy me! He exists to cause me problems. Since he is doing this on purpose, I have every reason to be upset with him. I have every reason to fight with him.”

Verse 6.22

As I do not become angry
At great sources of suffering such as bile disease,
Then why be angry at those with mind?
They too are provoked by conditions.

Verse 6.23

For example, although they are not wished for,
These sicknesses arise;
Likewise, although they are not wished for,
These afflictions forcibly arise.

Shantideva is asking us why we do not get upset when we have medical conditions or sicknesses that are due to imbalances of our elements. Although we feel uncomfortable when these sicknesses occur, somehow we do not get upset. We do not get angry at the sickness.

Why is it then that we are angry with those who cause us problems? Here “those” refers to sentient beings who have a mind.

We get sick for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we fall sick due to changes in the weather, interferences from non-human entities, a wrong diet and inappropriate lifestyle. There are a variety of conditions that cause us to fall sick. As such, we do not really have much control over them. When the causes and conditions—some of which we have no control over—are there, we fall sick. Sicknesses do not arise without a reason but whatever it may be, when we fall sick, we do not blame the sickness. We do not get angry at our sickness because we know that sickness occurs due to many reasons. In that sense, the sickness itself does not have any choice. Because of various causes and conditions, we experience discomfort or sickness.

But when we think of a person who is harming us, we feel that we are justified in getting angry with this person. We are justified in retaliating and fighting with this person. This is because we think that this person is harming us intentionally, “She is out there to get me. She is doing this on purpose.” Therefore we think, “I am right to be upset with her.” This is what we think.

But actually in reality, these two situations are similar in that the sickness we experience and the harm we receive from another person, both arise without any choice and without any independence because they both arise due to their own causes and conditions.

Due to certain causes and conditions that I mentioned earlier, we experience sickness.

In the case of the person however, we feel he is harming us intentionally and that he has full control over himself. But actually he too does not have any control or independence as he is under the influence and control of his afflictions. The person harming us is an afflicted person, i.e., he is someone who has afflictions and who is under their control. When this person harms us, the act of harming us does not arise without cause. He is harming us precisely because of his afflictions such as the anger in his mind. Since he is harming us because he is under the influence and control of his afflictions, he is doing so without any choice on his part.

As such, the harm that we experience is a dependent-arising, i.e., it occurred in dependence on some other factor. Because the harm that we experienced is a dependent-arising, that harm is by nature empty, i.e., it is empty of existing inherently. When we think about dependent-arising in this context, we can focus on the emptiness of:

- ourselves being the experiencers of the harm
- the person who is causing us harm
- the harm itself, i.e., the harmful action

The main point here is to understand that the people harming us or those who are upset with us are not doing so out of choice because they are under the influence and control of their own afflictions such as anger. It is due to their afflictions that they cause us harm so in that sense, they do not have any control or independence.

When we think about this, then it is not appropriate to be upset with the perpetrator who is harming us. If we really want to be upset or point a finger at something, we should be upset with the afflictions of that harm-doer. We should be angry at their afflictions and not at the person.

Khen Rinpoche: Are you getting the logic here? Whether you can practise this or not is another matter. But first, you must get the logic of what Shantideva is saying.

This is the logic. Of course we also have our own logic. We would definitely think, “Yes, our sicknesses do not have any choice. Due to causes and conditions, they arise so I don’t blame the sicknesses.

Yes, you can also tell me that the person does not have any choice because he is under the control of his afflictions. But why should I get angry at his afflictions? His afflictions don’t have any intention to harm me but *he* has the intention to harm me. He is the one who is upset with me, not his afflictions.”

B. Fury is not willingly developed

Verse 6.24

Without thinking, "I shall be angry,"
 People become angry with no resistance,
 And without thinking, "I shall produce,"
 Likewise anger itself is produced.

Before we get upset, prior to our anger arising, when the mind is OK, we do not sit there, thinking, "I'm going to harm this person. I want to hurt this person." Nobody will sit around, wishing to be upset and to harm others.

But sometimes when we meet with certain conditions, then the thought arises, "I want to hurt this person." There must be some conditions coming together, then we get upset. Without these conditions coming together, we will not get upset.

If we look at the conditions that made us upset and want to harm others, the conditions themselves from their own side do not have any intention to harm others. But even though these conditions do not have any thought of harming another person, when these conditions come together, without choice, anger and the thought to harm others arise.

You have to follow the line of reasoning:

- By using the earlier example of sicknesses, we have established how sicknesses arise due to various causes and conditions. As such, they do not arise independently.
- We also looked at how people do not get upset without any reason. They get upset and harm us primarily because of their own afflictions.

So whether we are falling sick or someone is harming us, these situations arise because of causes and conditions coming together.

When we look at the person, no one has the intention right from the beginning wanting to harm someone else. But when certain causes and conditions come together, when these causes and conditions are complete, somehow without any choice, anger arises and the thought to harm others arises.

Why is that person harming us? We can say that the person has a choice. Or the person has the intention to harm us even if his afflictions do not have the intention to harm us. Or we can say that the person may not have the intention to harm us but the person nonetheless still ends up wanting to harm us. Why? Because once the causes and conditions for him wanting to harm us come together, that thought of harming us will arise in his mind naturally.

C. As all wrongdoing arises from causes and conditions, it is not independent

Verse 6.25

All misdeeds there are
 And all the various kinds of negativities

Arise through the force of conditions;
They do not have self-power¹.

Due to afflictions such as anger and attachment, non-virtuous karma—such as taking the lives of others, taking what is not given, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, offensive speech, meaningless speech and so forth—is accumulated. All these non-virtues arise due to the force of conditions. These non-virtues do not arise intentionally or independently of some other factors.

We cannot do something intentionally without depending on some other factors. The reason why people engage in non-virtue such as acts of harming others is because of various causes and conditions coming together. As such it is not as if these actions arise without cause, that they are independent or carried out due to a mere wish.

If we understand this and we really think about it, then when we look at people who are engaging in a lot of non-virtue such as those engaging in all kinds of acts of harming others, never mind not getting upset with these people. In fact we would even generate compassion for them. This is because we understand they are under the control of some other factors and they are not doing such actions intentionally. This is the reality.

But when people engage in non-virtue, when they harm others including harming us, we feel they are doing it intentionally, that they have control and a say over their actions. This is what we think. This is what makes us even more upset because we think that they are doing so purposely or intentionally. But they do *not* have any control as they are being controlled by their afflictions.

In the first place, there are many causes and conditions for a person to get upset with us. When these causes and conditions come together, that person powerlessly and without choice gets angry. Motivated by her anger, she harms us.

If we are able to understand this line of reasoning, rather than feeling, “That person is doing this on purpose,” we should see that the person has no choice, that she is completely powerless and completely under the control of various causes and conditions as well as her own afflictions.

When this person is upset with us or harms us, it is possible to think, “It is like that. What to do? Nothing can be done.” It is even possible then to have some thought of concern, affection, love and compassion for the harm-doer.

What about the afflictions of the harm-doer, such as her anger? Even the afflictions themselves are not independent.

2. Their causes and conditions are also not independent

Verse 6.26

These conditions that assemble together
Have no intention, “I shall produce,”

¹ This line was interpreted as, “They do not have any independence.”

And neither does that produced by them
Have the intention, “I will produce.”

Without an external object, a visual form, there is nothing to be seen. Without a form, you cannot say, “I saw something. My eye consciousness perceived a visual form.” Without seeing something, you cannot say, “it is beautiful,” or, “it is ugly.”

Without the object, sound, you cannot say, “I heard something.” The ear consciousness apprehending sound would not arise. You cannot talk about the sound being pleasant or unpleasant.

Without an external object to touch, i.e., for tactility to arise, there is no way you can say, “I felt that object.” If there isn’t a tactile object, you will not be able to know the feeling of that object. You cannot say, “this is rough,” or, “this is smooth.”

In order for a pleasant or unpleasant feeling to arise, let’s say we are talking about bodily feeling, there must be a coming together of the object, the sense power and the consciousness. The coming together of these three factors, which we then call the mental factor of contact, leads to feeling. Depending on how we perceive or distinguish the object, it is either pleasant or unpleasant. But in order for there to be such a feeling in the first place, there must be all these other factors.

Likewise in order for anger to arise, there must be the coming together of these three factors: (1) an external situation or object, (2) the consciousness and (3) the mental sense power. Although these three factors must come together in order for anger to arise, these three factors, whether individually or collectively, from their own side, do not have the intention to produce anger.

Anger is a product of the coming together of these three factors but anger itself also does not have the thought, “I am now produced and have arisen in dependence on these three things.”

The point behind this line of reasoning is to show that anger is not generated intentionally. It is not due to a person thinking, “I want to get angry,” and then anger arises. The point is that anger itself is a product of causes and conditions so that when these causes and conditions come together, anger will arise.

B. Refuting the existence of independent causes

1. Refuting the independent self and principal of the Samkhyas

A. Refuting the principal generates independent expressions

The next few verses refute the positions of some non-Buddhist schools. The Buddhists’ understanding of causality is very different from some of the non-Buddhist schools.

For example, there are proponents of a non-Buddhist Indian philosophical system called the Samkhyas who assert causality but they assert that causes are independent. To them, there is such a thing as an independent cause.

A cause that exists independently is completely opposite to what Buddhists assert. We also assert causality but we assert that causes themselves are under the control of some other factors so causes are other-powered.

First we refute the concept of the principal and generality asserted by the Samkhyas, who are Indian non-Buddhists. They assert that this principal and generality exist independently.

Verse 6.27

That which is asserted as the “Principal”
And that which is imputed as the “Self,”
Do not arise after having purposefully thought,
“I shall arise.”

Verse 6.28

If they are not produced and non-existent,
What is asserted to be produced at that time?

In the non-Buddhist Indian philosophical system propounded by the Samkhyas, they assert that everything that exists is included within 25 categories. They divide existents or objects of knowledge into 25 categories, which are exhaustive, i.e., whatever exists necessarily falls into these 25 categories.

The Samkhyas also talk about there being a principal and an aspect (or an expression) of the principal with the principal being like a creator of all the different aspects while the aspects are creations or expressions of the principal.

So of the 25 categories of the objects of knowledge, one is the principal, one is the self and the remaining 23 categories are the aspects or expressions of the principal.

The Samkhyas assert that the self is consciousness or awareness and it is permanent, unitary and independent.

The Samkhyas talk about how all existents or objects of knowledge can also be subsumed under six terminological divisions such as quality, substance and so forth.

There are nine items under the terminological division of substance—we do not have to worry about what they all are—one of which is the self. This self that belongs to the terminological division of substance is not consciousness. Although this self is a form nevertheless it is permanent, unitary and independent. But because this self is a division of substance, this self is said to be substantially established. Because it is substantially established, it is not dependent on some other factor. Rather this self acts as the basis for other qualities.

These are the assertions of the Samkhyas.

Among the six terminological divisions, besides the division of substance, there is the division of quality. In general, within the division of quality, there are 24 qualities. Nine of those qualities arise in dependence on the self and these include happiness,

suffering, anger and attachment. Anger being one of the qualities that arise in dependence on the self is said to be produced independently by that self.

How does this fit into our discussions here? The point here is that there is this self that is substantially established. This self is not consciousness but nevertheless it is permanent, unitary and independent. But in dependence on this self, certain qualities come about.

One classification:

- 25 categories of objects of knowledge: (1) the principal (2) the self and 23 aspects or expressions of the principal
- Under this classification, the Samkhyas assert that the self is consciousness or awareness and it is permanent, unitary and independent

Another classification:

- All objects of knowledge is subsumed under the six terminological divisions that include quality, substance and so forth.
- In the category of substance, there are nine things, one of which is the self. Here the self is not consciousness but a form that is nevertheless permanent, unitary and independent. Also this self is substantially established, i.e., it is not dependent on some other factor.
- In the category of quality, there are 24 qualities among which the Samkhyas assert that there are nine qualities—such as happiness, suffering, anger, attachment and so forth—that arise in dependence on the self, i.e., the self acts as the basis for other qualities.

The main point is that there are some non-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems that assert causality but the problem for us is that while they assert causality, at the same time, they assert that these are independent causes. These causes, being independent, do not depend on some other factors; yet they can produce effects. That is the problem. For us, this is not tenable logically and is not possible. So these six lines of verses 6.27 and 6.28 are saying that the philosophy of the Samkhyas is incorrect.

Khen Rinpoche: Do you know why it is not right?

The point is that the self—in dependence upon which qualities such as anger and attachment are produced—is in the first place independent. Since it is not produced itself, how can it produce something else?

Since you (i.e., referring to the Samkhyas) posit a cause that is independent, that means it is:

- not dependent on some other factors, i.e., it exists from its own side without depending on something else
- not produced

If it is not produced and it is independent, how then can it produce something else?

For the sake of analysis, even if you were to allow for such an impossibility to be possible—by asserting that an independent cause can be produced by another cause that is also independent—since it itself is produced, how can it be permanent? It has to be impermanent! But Samkhyas assert that it is permanent.

If you assert that there is an independent cause and that independent cause is itself produced from something else, then it cannot be independent and it is not autonomous.

The point here is that although the Samkhyas said that there are causes and conditions that produce things, they also assert these causes to be independent.

- If the cause itself is independent, it is permanent.
- It is not subject to momentary change because it is not produced by something else.
- Since it is not produced by something else, it itself is permanent.
- If it is permanent, it cannot produce an effect.

Therefore the Samkhyas' assertion that anger and so forth can be produced from an independent cause, the self, is untenable.

Khen Rinpoche You understand? OK. I make it simple in two sentences.

First you have to understand what our system, the Buddhist view, is:

- If it is a functioning thing (or a product), its existence is necessarily dependent on some other factors.
- As it comes into being in dependence on some other factors, therefore it is not independent.
- As it is a result of some other factors, it is necessarily other-powered. It cannot be self-powered.

That is the reality.

But some non-Buddhist schools say that there *can* be an independent cause. There are causes that produce effects but the causes themselves are independent. For example, the Samkhyas said that the principal and the self are causes that produce results but they themselves are permanent and independent. That is not tenable and won't work at all.

The main line of reasoning is that there isn't such a thing as a self-powered cause. If it is a cause, it is necessarily other-powered. Other-powered means it is not independent and that it comes into being by depending on some other thing other than itself.

The reality is that if something is a cause:

- it is *necessarily* impermanent
- it is *necessarily* other-powered, i.e., it is dependent on some other factors other than itself
- it is *not* self-powered.

Therefore there isn't such a thing as an independent cause. That is the reality.

But when you look at the Samkhyas' position, they talk of there being a principal and a self and they assert that these two are causes that can produce effects. Then we analyse this by looking at the principal and self.

- Do the principal and the self asserted by the Samkhyas arise from a cause or without a cause?
- If the Samkhyas were to say that they arise from causes, the principal and the self, which are also asserted by them to be permanent, cannot exist.
- Because if the principal and the self are themselves products of other causes, they cannot be independent. They cannot be self-powered. But the Samkhyas assert that they are self-powered.
- If they are self-powered and independent, they cannot produce things. But the Samkhyas say that the principal and the self can produce whole varieties of effects.
- If they are self-powered, they are permanent, i.e., they don't undergo momentary change. How can they produce something else? It is impossible!

B. Refuting that an aware being autonomously experiences objects

Verse 6.28 c, d

Since it would always be distracted to its objects,
It follows that it will never cease.

This is refuting the self that is a consciousness asserted by the Samkhyas.

To keep it simple, the Samkhyas assert that the self engages with or utilises its objects independently from its own side without depending on some other factors. This is what the text is refuting here.

This assertion by the Samkhyas leads to this logical fallacy: it follows that because it is engaging independently with its object, once the self engages with its object, it will continue to engage with it forever without stopping.

You have to remember the assertions by the Samkhyas:

- They assert that the self is independent and permanent. Being permanent means it is never-changing.
- They assert that the self engages with or utilises its objects independently.

These are the assertions.

Then what would be the problem and the fallacy?

If you assert that there is such a permanent and independent self that engages its object independently, it follows that once it engages its object, it will continuously do so because it is permanent and never changing. You will never be able to posit a time when the self is *not* engaging its object since it is permanent and independent.

But that can never be the case because we know that form, sound and so forth change. When there is a change in the object, there must also be a change in the experience of the object. For example, when a form ceases to exist, you cannot talk of a self utilising a form that is non-existent.

So the verse 6.28 c, d refutes the Samkhyas's assertion that this self can engage in its objects independently.

Next is refuting the assertions of another non-Buddhist Indian philosophical system whose proponents are known as the Nyayas. Their assertions are similar to the Samkhyas.

2. Refuting the independent self of the Nyaya's

Verse 6.29

If the Self were permanent
It would obviously be devoid of activity, just like space.
So even if it were to meet with other conditions
What could the unchanging do?

Verse 6.30

Even if, when acted upon, it remains as before,
Then what did activity do to it?
If it is said, "This is the activity of that,"
How could the two ever be related?

We just assume that we understood these verses!²

The next outline says it is actually inappropriate to be angry upon understanding that all beings are like emanations.

3. Once one understands all migrators to be like emanations, they see that it is unreasonable to be furious with them

Verse 6.31

Hence all are governed by others,
And through the power of that, they have no power.
Having understood in this way, I shall not become angry
At all things that are like emanations.

All the examples given earlier, such as anger, sicknesses, the harm-doers and so forth, are all dependent-arising in that they all arise through the force of some other factors. They do not arise from their own side.

The harm that we receive is the result of the coming together of many causes and conditions. The causes and conditions that brought about the harm that we experience are themselves the products of other causes and conditions. Those causes and conditions are also products of other causes and conditions and so forth.

² While both the Samkhyas and the Nyayas assert an independent, permanent self, they are differentiated with regard to the nature of that self. The Samkhyas assert that the self is the consciousness while the Nyayas assert that the self is matter. The Nyayas assert that the independent thought of harming is produced by this independent, permanent self. Buddhists refute that such a self has the ability to function at all. It cannot produce any effect since it is permanent. Such a self is like un-compounded space, which does not produce anything at all. (Page 4, Lesson 7, Module 7, First Basic Program).

When there is a harm-doer in our life, i.e., the person who causes us problems and harms, he is doing so because of his own affliction, anger.

Why is he angry? He is angry because of his own mental unhappiness.

Why is a person unhappy? Because there is the coming together of various causes and conditions such as the object or situation, the sense power and the consciousness. When these three come together, it produces an experience that makes the person unhappy. Because his unhappiness builds up over time, he gets angry. Then because of his anger, this person harms us. Usually this is the process. It all starts with the coming together of a situation or an object, the sense power and the consciousness.

But why are there these three things in the first place? If you think about it, they must also come from causes. There is where karma and afflictions come into play. You can see that there is this whole causal mechanism.

Something arises because of a cause and that cause itself is the product of other causes and so on and so forth. As such, the various causes that bring about an experience are in themselves products of other causes. Therefore:

- Causes are not independent.
- Causes themselves are dependent-arisings.
- Causes are other-powered.
- Causes are not self-powered.

So there is no beginning to this whole causal mechanism. In short, if it is a functioning thing, if it is a product and if it is an impermanent phenomenon, it has no beginning. If you were to look for an independently existing cause, the very first moment of the real cause, you will not be able to find it because there is no beginning.

A cause is the result of some other causes. These other causes are the results of other causes that precede them and so forth. Going by this line of reasoning, in general, there is no beginning to causes and there is no independently existent cause.

- As such, things are dependently originated. Therefore you can say that things are dependently arisen.
- As such, there isn't a single phenomenon whose existence is not dependent on some other factors.
- As such, there isn't any truly existent phenomenon. There is no phenomenon that exists by its own entity, from its own side and independent of other factors. That is impossible.
- Whatever exists is necessarily dependently arisen.
- As such, phenomena are like illusions.

As such, the harm-doer also does not exist independently. He is not truly existent and he does not exist from his own side. He came into being because of the inter-play of many causes and conditions. We can use this reflection to counteract any anger that we may have towards that person.

When there is anger in our mind, when we are upset with a situation, an object or a person, from the perspective of this anger, our anger is directed at an independently existent person, a real harm-doer from his own side and a truly existent harm-doer. A harm-doer exists from his own side right there to do bad things to us. There is no other reason for his actions or his behaviour. He is just there. This is what we believe. We get upset because of that. So we are getting upset at something that does not exist.

We have to realize that the situation or object that we are upset with does not exist by reflection on dependent arising. We have to realise how that person does not exist independently because there are many causes and conditions that cause the person to act in that way. Because there are many causes and conditions, therefore that harm-doer is not independent.

In order to help us understand subtle dependent arising, first we have to understand coarse dependent arising, i.e., dependent arising at the level of causality.

There are many causes and conditions that make the harm-doer angry, that makes him harm you. If you understand that there is a whole list of causes and conditions that make him do whatever he did to you, then you realise that that person is not independent.

By depending on our understanding of dependent arising at the level of causality, we come to understand dependent arising at its subtle level. Since his action is a product of various causes and conditions, therefore he is not independent. He does not exist from his own side. Therefore he is empty of existing truly. He is empty of existing inherently.

This is how we can counteract our anger with these reflections on dependent arising. First at the coarser level, at the level of causality and based on that, we come to understand how things are dependently arisen at their subtle level.

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