

**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 38****1 July 2014****CHAPTER SIX: VERSES 6.84 - 6.95.**

- C. Arresting fury towards those who do well by one's enemies
  - 3. Abandoning impatience with the accomplishment of material gain (V. 6.84 – V. 6.83)
- 3. Arresting fury towards that which hinders one's desires
  - A. It is unreasonable to be impatient with that which hinders the harm destined for one's enemies (V. 6. 87 – V. 89)
  - B. It is unreasonable to be impatient with that which hinders the benefit directed towards oneself and one's interests
    - 1. It is unreasonable to be furious with that which hinders mundane interests (V. 6. 90 – V. 95)

Last week we looked at how we should be happy when our enemies or the persons that we don't like are happy when they are praised or receive some material gain. We talked about how we should tolerate seeing our enemies or the people that we don't like doing well, when they are happy or have a good reputation. We should not be intolerant of this and feel unhappy about it.

In particular, if we are someone who has taken the oath and pledge to achieve the state of full enlightenment in order to accomplish the welfare of sentient beings, yet at the same time, we cannot be happy when our enemy achieves a little bit of happiness for himself, then there is a big internal contradiction. It is said that a person who is unable to be happy with the small happiness that the enemy is experiencing would have no chance of generating bodhicitta.

It is inappropriate to be jealous of our enemies or the people we don't like when they achieve some material gain.

**C. ARRESTING FURY TOWARDS THOSE WHO DO WELL BY ONE'S ENEMIES (cont'd)**

- 3. *Abandoning the impatience with the accomplishment of material gain*
  - B. *Reflecting on how there is nothing to want in that*
    - 1. *It is unreasonable to feel jealousy for the material gain of others*

Verse 6.84

Whether he obtains it from him

Or whether it remains in the benefactor's house,

In either case you shall get nothing.

What is the use whether he is given something or not?

Imagine a situation when you are with your enemy or the person that you don't like. Someone comes along and gives a gift to your enemy but you don't get anything. How would you react? In such a situation, when you find yourself getting upset with the enemy for receiving something that you didn't get and you are also getting upset at the giver, how are you to think? The advice is given in verse 6.84.

It doesn't matter what the giver gives to your enemy. It can be gold, money or some other object. Does that mean you will not be angry if the giver doesn't give it to the enemy? But whether the giver gives that object to your enemy or whether the giver keeps it at home, at the end of the day, you are not getting anything anyway. In reality there is no real difference whether your enemy receives something from the giver or not. You are not going to get anything but you get angry when the giver gives it to the enemy.

The point is that at the end of the day, it doesn't matter whether the giver gives the gift to the enemy or not, you are not getting anything. Therefore logically speaking, there is no reason for you to be upset at the enemy for receiving the object from the giver and there is also no reason for you to be upset at the giver because in both cases, you will still not get anything. In that situation, wouldn't it be better to stay calm, relaxed and undisturbed?

*2. It is unreasonable to discard one's own qualities*

Verse 6.85

So why do I throw away my good qualities,  
Merit and faith?  
Tell me, why am I not angry  
For not holding what will be gain?

You get upset with the enemy for receiving something from the giver and you also get upset with the giver. What is the source of that unhappiness? If you check, you will find that you are upset in that situation because you want that object. It is only because you did not get that object that you become upset.

You are upset when your enemy or the people that you don't like receive gifts. It boils down to you having the desire to gain that material object or possession. Because you have that desire, when you don't get what you desire, then of course you get upset. If what you want is material gain, getting upset and angry with your enemy for receiving the gift and the giver for giving your enemy the gift is not the way to achieve your desire.

If you get angry with the giver and the enemy for receiving the gift, in the process you are destroying your merit. In fact it becomes an obstacle to getting what you want, in this case material gain. When you get upset, you look bad and you behave in a way that causes others to dislike you. You also destroy your merit. These are all obstacles if what you want is material gain.

If you want material gain, then you have to work at the causes for receiving material gain such as increasing your stock of merit, engaging in acceptable behaviour that would lead you to receive gifts from others, living an ethical life and so forth. If

material gain is what you want, then these are the causes for you to receive material gain.

But this is not to say that you should behave well, live life ethically and increase your merit for the purpose of getting material gain. Here you have to understand that this is not advice encouraging you to look for material gain. That is not the point. The main point here relates to you getting upset because you don't get the gift that the enemy receives. This verse is telling you that that is not the way to get the material gain.

This verse is pointing out that ultimately you are responsible for not getting what you want because when you see others doing well, especially the enemy getting something and you not getting anything at all, your usual response is to be upset. You get upset and angry with the enemy and also at the giver. In so doing, you destroy your merit and externally, your behaviour also becomes unacceptable to others. Your behaviour and your destruction of your own merit are the causes of you not getting anything in the end.

So rather than getting angry at the giver and at the enemy for receiving gifts, if you really want to get upset, you should be upset at yourself because you are at fault. That is the point. It is not about you wanting material gain and then to achieve that you put on a good show of living ethically and so forth.

*3. While it is right to feel sorrow for one's own negativities, it is not right to be jealous of others' virtues*

Verse 6.86

Not only do you not have any sorrow  
For having committed negativities,  
Do you wish to compete with others  
Who have created merit?

Having said this, when you get upset when the enemy or the person you dislike get something but you don't get what they get, you may think, "If he gets something and I don't get anything, I will be upset and angry. So it will be really good if he doesn't get anything as well because if he doesn't get anything, then I will be OK. I won't be upset with the enemy as long as he doesn't get anything. If I don't get anything, then he shouldn't get anything as well. I have no issues with that. I am OK with that."

If you think like that, you should understand that you not getting anything is the result of your own doing. It is because you do not know what to cultivate and what to abandon. You did not create and have not accumulated the causes and the merit to receive material gain. Instead you get upset and engage in all kinds of negativities. That is actually quite a sad situation. We should be sad at our own situation of not having created the causes but creating negativities instead.

Why is the other person receiving material gain? This is due to having practised ethical discipline and accumulated the causes. This is why this person is receiving something now because she has created the cause for receiving it.

Instead of being sad with our own limited situation, we don't examine ourselves. At the same time we want to compete with others, those who have created the causes and have the merit to receive such material gain. Why do we do that?

The text is telling us to ask ourselves why we are competing in this negative way with those who have merit. If we really want to compete with such people, we should compete in terms of being wise and skilled in knowing what to cultivate and what to abandon. We should be wise and skilled in guarding our ethical discipline and in accumulating merit.

In the past few lessons, we talked about the twelve desirable objects and the twelve undesirable objects. We have finished with the twelve undesirable objects in relation to oneself and in relation to the people who matter to us, our relatives, loved ones, friends and so forth.

Now we are going to start with the twelve desirable objects. If there is anything that hinders us or our loved ones from getting the twelve desirable objects, we get angry and upset. What are we going to do in those situations? How do we practise patience then?

If we talk about the twelve desirable objects in relation to our enemy, we want our enemy to suffer and to have bad things happen to them. We want them to have bad reputation, to be unhappy, poor, deprived and so forth. That is what we want. If there is anything that interferes with that, then we get upset. If there is anything that stops or hinders our enemy from being harmed in any way, we don't like it.

### **3. ARRESTING FURY TOWARDS THAT WHICH HINDERS ONE'S DESIRES<sup>1</sup>**

*A. It is unreasonable to be impatient with that which hinders the harm destined for one's enemies*

*1. Disliking enemies is of no benefit to oneself*

Verse 6.87 a, b

Even if your enemy is not joyful,

What is there for you to be joyful about?

If our enemy receives any of these four things—good reputation, praise, material gains or happiness—we don't like it. We like it when they don't have these four things. So if anybody is to come along and stop them from having material gain, we like it. We want them to suffer and if anybody comes along and stops them from suffering, we don't like it. But the verse is asking us, "If the enemy suffers, what is there for you to be happy about?"

When we see the people we dislike getting into trouble, big or small, perish or experience something bad and they suffer, we feel that they deserve it, that those

---

<sup>1</sup> 1. A general presentation of the divisions of anger in terms of the objects that give rise to anger (V. 6.11)

2. Arresting fury towards that which brings unwanted things (V. 6.12 – V. 6. 86)

3. Arresting fury towards that which hinders one's desires (V. 6.87 – V. 6.126)

things should have happened to them. We feel good and happy. That is completely distorted rejoicing.

Here the teaching is asking us, “What real benefit do you get from generating that kind of distorted rejoicing?” It says here that not only is there no benefit; in fact there is only harm. We receive harm.

In reality, our malice or ill-will towards the enemy would not harm the enemy.

2. *Enemies are not harmed by your developing ill will*

Verse 6.87 c, d

Your mind merely wishing

Did not cause him to be harmed.

There are times when we really feel like that. This happens. When we really don't like someone or when we hate someone, we mentally wish for something bad to befall that person. We wish that he will die, be hurt or suffer in some way. Sometimes we even verbalise our wish, saying things like, “You just go and die.”

The teaching is saying that just verbalising or having such malicious thoughts does not do the damage you intend for the enemy. We have such thoughts and we say such things but at the end of the day, they do nothing whatsoever to the enemy. We don't harm the enemy but we actually end up harming ourselves.

It is inappropriate to be happy when our enemy or the people that we don't like are suffering.

3. *It harms oneself*

A. *It is unreasonable to enjoy the harm that befalls your enemy*

Verse 6.88 a, b

Even if his suffering is established due to your wish,

What is there for you to be joyful about?

We may think, “May this person die. May he suffer. May something bad befall him.” Sometimes we even verbalise these thoughts. This is called a perverted wish or prayer. In reality however such actions only harm us. They cannot do anything to the enemy or really harm the enemy in any way.

Even if, say, our bad intentions or malicious words can actually have an effect on the enemy, even if our enemy were to be harmed as a result, the text is saying, “What is there for you to be joyful about even if you do achieve your wish?”

If we actually hold on to this kind of happiness—feeling happy when our enemy suffers—it will only be the cause for us to suffer in the future.

B. *If one holds onto that joy, it will become a cause of great suffering for oneself*

Verse 6.88 c, d

OPINION: I shall be satisfied.

RESPONSE: How could there be anything more ravaging than that?

Verse 6.89

Having been held by this unbearable and sharp hook  
Cast by the fisherman of the afflictions,  
It is certain that I shall be cooked  
In the pots of sentient beings' hell by the hell guardians.

We may object to the argument that there is no benefit for us if we are happy when the enemy suffers. To us, there is benefit as we think, "I feel good. Before I die, he must suffer. When he suffers, I feel good. Because I feel good, that is the benefit I get."

Then this verse asks, "If you happen to think like that, what is the answer to thinking in this way?"

If you think like that, you have to understand that this way of thinking—feeling satisfied because your enemy is suffering—will only cause you to suffer in this life and your future lives. That is the greatest loss.

As we saw in the previous verse, wishing the enemy to suffer will not cause him to suffer. In fact, we are causing ourselves to suffer in this life and in future lives. In reality, the enemy does not suffer.

If you happen to be someone who has taken the bodhisattva vows, as a practitioner of bodhicitta who is entertaining these thoughts, it will lead you to commit the bodhisattva root downfalls. When you die, you will go to the lower realms. In fact you will go to the hell realms. When you end up in the hell realms, you will have to experience great suffering.

If you have such negative thoughts, you are like a fish caught by the fisherman. With the hook in your mouth, you suffer unbearable pain. Likewise when you are caught by the fisherman of anger, that anger induces the malice that causes you to accumulate very strong negative karma that will throw you into the hell realms where you will be cooked in the boiling cauldrons of hell.

When motivated by anger, we entertain ill-will or malice, wishing to harm the other person. Remember our discussion in the previous lesson regarding covetousness? Here we can apply that discussion to ill-will. There will also be the motivation, performance and completion.

Let us look at the development of ill-will:

- First, there arises the thought, "I want to harm that person" or "I wish that person harm." That is the motivational phase.
- When that thought becomes stronger, you enter the performance phase.
- You feel good about wanting that person to suffer, "How wonderful if this person suffers. May everything that is bad happen to him." You feel that sense of satisfaction. Perhaps we can posit this mental satisfaction to be the completion of malice.

If you have the motivation, performance and completion, then karma is accumulated. The fruitional effect of that karma would be rebirth in the lower realms such as the hells. You should know that a karma that is accumulated is a karma whose result you will definitely experience. That is something you should know. In this example, the fruitional effect of such karma is rebirth in the hells.

From this discussion, we can see that if you have ill-will towards an enemy, even if you feel good about it, in reality your goal is not achieved because the enemy is not harmed. Wishing him harm does not harm him in any way. Rather we ourselves will be harmed in a terrible way by having to suffer in the hells. So actually we suffer the greatest loss.

As such, verses 6.88 c, d and 6.89 come under the outline, “If one holds onto that joy, it will become a cause of great suffering for oneself.” You have to understand that this is so. You have to think about it until you develop an ascertainment of it. Based on that, you have to restrain yourself from this way of thinking.

The next section is about why it is inappropriate to be intolerant or impatient when obstacles arise to obstruct us or the people who matter to us from receiving good things such as praise, material gain and so forth.

We embrace the eight worldly dharmas. We want the eight worldly dharmas. We want them for ourselves and we also want them for the people who matter to us. When something or somebody comes along to obstruct us, our loved ones or the people who matter to us from embracing, receiving and experiencing these eight worldly dharmas, we get upset. We will be upset with the situation or the person who interferes with that.

We want praise and good reputation. When anything or anybody comes along to interfere with that, we get upset. In that situation, how should we deal with it? First, there is no need for praise and reputation.

*B. It is unreasonable to be impatient with that which hinders the benefit directed towards oneself and one's interests*

*1. It is unreasonable to be furious with that which hinders mundane interests*

*A. It is unreasonable to be furious with that which hinders one's own praise and renown*

*1. There is no need for just praise and renown*

Verse 6.90

The honor of praise and fame

Will turn into neither merit nor life;

It will turn into neither strength nor freedom from sickness for me,

And also will not transform into physical happiness.

Verse 6.91 a, b

If I were to understand my welfare,

What is there in them that is my welfare?

We like praise. We want to be well-known. We want to have a good reputation. But praise, fame and having a good reputation cannot become causes for our happiness in future lives.

Even in this life, words of praise and having a good reputation will not make us live longer as they can never act as causes for our longevity. Also they will not confer on us physical strength nor can they protect us from sickness. They cannot confer on us bodily pleasure.

When we partake of food and drink, at least we get some kind of bodily pleasure and a pleasant feeling. Food and drink can also sustain our body. At least we get some pleasure from them. But we cannot obtain even this small pleasure from words of praise and a good reputation. So those who are really wise and expert in accomplishing their own goals and happiness know that praise and reputation have no bearing on these things whatsoever. They do us no good. There is no benefit at all.

We hear these words but inside us, we still object to this, don't we? We may accept this, "Yes, yes, there is no benefit in our future lives. There is no benefit in that they do not strengthen my body, protect me from sickness, give me any physical pleasure or pleasant feeling. But this doesn't mean that there is no benefit at all."

We feel there are benefits. Why? Because we feel good and that is all that matters. This is how we think, "All that matters is that when I am praised and I have a good reputation, I feel good. So how can you tell me there is no benefit? There is benefit. If anybody were to stop or obstruct me from being praised or cause me not to have a good reputation, those are reasons for me to get upset because she is stopping me from feeling good."

In Gyaltsab Je's commentary, the answer to this way of thinking is classified under the outline that says, "It is unreasonable to seek merely mental joy," and that goes with the last two lines of verse 6.91.

*2. It is unreasonable to seek merely mental joy*

Verse 6.91c, d

If I desire just mental happiness,

Then I should devote myself to gambling and so forth, and also drinking.

"If I desire just mental happiness," then the answer is, "Then I should devote myself to gambling and so forth, and also drinking."

We see the reasons that we come up with to counter the argument that was thrown at us with respect to praise and good reputation. We say, "Yes. I accept that there is no benefit in our future lives. They do not make me stronger physically and so forth." Yet we still argue, "But they make me feel good. That is all that matters. I am happy and I want that."

Now Shantideva is taking the reason we have given, i.e., "I feel good and that is all that matters." Shantideva says, "If your only reason is that feeling good is all that matters and it can justify anything, then why don't you gamble? Why don't you



drink?”

Normally most people would find that drinking and gambling are not beneficial, don't they? Drinking and gambling are harmful. But if going by our reasoning—"I want to feel good by being praised. So if somebody obstructs that, I will be angry. That is justified because I feel happy when I am praised."—then by extension, we should also feel happy when we drink and gamble.

The essential point is this: Our reason for wanting to be praised and having a good reputation is because we feel good. That is the only reason. Basically we are also saying that feeling good can justify doing those things that are usually considered not good to do, those things are usually not permissible to do.

Next verse is under the outline which says, "There is no need for mere praise and reputation."

### *3. Grasping for merely that is erroneous*

#### *A. There is no need for just praise and renown*

Verse 6.92

If for the sake of fame

I lose my wealth or get myself killed,

What can mere words do then?

Once I am dead, to whom will they give pleasure?

There are some people who practise generosity but they are actually looking for good reputation. They want it to be known to everybody that they are so generous. So there are people who really give but they are motivated by the desire wanting to be known for their generosity.

Then there are also people who want to be famous, to be known as a hero. They go off fighting and waging wars. Of course when they fight, they may lose their lives.

When that happens, who or what does it benefit—all these words of praise and good reputation? They do not bring any benefit to the body. They also do not bring any real benefit to the mind.

#### *B. To dislike the loss of praise and renown is childish*

Verse 6.93

When their sandcastles collapse,

Children howl in despair;

Likewise when my praise and reputation decline

My mind becomes like a child.

Here it says that if we really sit down and think deeply, we can see that we are like children. The example here is of children building sand castles. When children build sand castles, they put in a lot of effort. After they have built the rough structure of the castle, they feel very happy. If then for whatever reason that sand castle collapses, the children will experience great distress. They will just cry and cry.

The teachings are saying that we are like that. We want to be praised. We want affirmation and recognition from others. But when there is a decline in our reputation, we are like children because we get very disturbed. It doesn't take much praise to make us feel elated. Just a little bit of praise will make us feel very happy. But when there is a slight decline in the affirmation or recognition we receive from others or a slight decline in our reputation, we feel terrible. We feel so bad and lose our sense of self-worth. As such, we are likened to children who cry when their sand castle collapses.

*Khen Rinpoche: So don't cry when the sand castle collapses.*

4. *The reasons it is erroneous*

A. *It is unreasonable to be attached to the joy one feels for praise of oneself*

Verse 6.94

Since short-lived sounds are without mind,  
They cannot possibly think of praising me.  
It makes others happy,  
That fame is counted as a cause of joy.

Verse 6.95

Whether this praise is directed at myself or someone else  
How shall I be benefited by others' joy?  
Since that joy is theirs alone  
I shall not obtain even a part of it.

We like people who praise us. Whoever praises us to make us happy, we not only like that person but we also cling to him, "Oh, this person is very good."

Here we are asked to look at ourselves and our mind to check what we are attached to:

- Are we attached to the words of praise?
- Are we attached to the person's mind that feels happy when he is praising us because when the person is praising us, it seems that he is happy doing so?

Look at the words of praise. The words are essentially the sounds we hear. Since the words are sounds as such, the words are non-sentient and do not have a mind. So the words do not have any intention or the thought to make us happy. So we are not attached to the sounds. We may concede, "Fine. I'm not attached to the sound of the words of praise."

Then let's assume that the person who is praising us is happy doing so. Is there a possibility of us being attached to the fact that the person is happy praising us? Assuming we are attached to the happiness of the person who is praising, then the response to that is this, "The person is happy praising you but what has his happiness got to do with you? It is none of your business! Will his happiness make you happy?"

If that person is really happy praising us, that is his business. He experiences that

happiness but there is no way we can partake of that happiness ourselves. There is no way he can even share a portion of that happiness in the sense of that person giving some of it to us.

You have to remember that here there are these two lines of argument to substantiate the fact that there is no reason for us to be attached to praise and reputation.

We are attached to fame and reputation and we like to hear good words and pleasant words. The question is this, “What are we attached to? Are we attached to the sound? Is there something good there? What is good about it?” So it is not the sound.

Then the next question is this, “Are we clinging on to the happiness experienced in the mind of that person when he is praising us?” That also cannot be the case because that person feeling happy has nothing to do with us as his happiness cannot be transferred to us.

*Khen Rinpoche: Is this correct or not? I myself also don't know.*

What do you think of verses 6.94 and 6.95?

Here we are trying to prove that there is no reason whatsoever for us to be attached to praise and having a good reputation.

But we are attached to them so here the question that we should ask ourselves is this, “What exactly are we attached to?” We know we are attached to these two things. Or perhaps we are not very sure what *exactly* we are attached to. So we are listing out the possibilities. Are we attached to the words? If it is not the words, then it has to be something else. In this case, that something else is the happiness in the mind of the person who is praising us, i.e., the mind that feels happy when he is praising us.

Now do you see the logic?

Obviously we know we are attached. We don't have to analyse that. What we are analysing is *what* we are attached to:

- There are the words of praise that come from the person who is praising you. The words are essentially sounds. So are we attached to the sound of the words of praise?
- Or are we attached to the person who is praising us? If we say that we are attached to the person, there must be something within that person that we are attached to. Can it be the mind of the person who has the intention to praise us, the happiness felt by that mind when he is praising us? Is that what we are attached to?

The point is that we are not attached to the sound because there is no reason to be attached to the sound of the words of praise. It is inappropriate to be attached to those sounds.

Neither is it appropriate to be attached to the mind of the person who is praising us.

Even if the person is happy praising us, we cannot partake of that person's happiness because that person cannot share his happiness with us. As such, there is no benefit to be attached to praise and good reputation.

*Student:* It could be referring to our attachment to the other person's approval and affirmation of us. When he approves of us, he has a happy mind so we care about his approval.

(Ven. Gyurme puts forth the position that when one is praised, one does *not* care whether the person praising us is happy or not. We only care about the fact that we are being praised).

(Another student responds but response is inaudible).

*Khen Rinpoche:* He likes you so that is why you like him, isn't it? When the person praises you, of course you think that person is good. His heart is good.

*Ven Gyurme:* But when the enemy praises me, I don't think the enemy is good but I like the praise.

*Khen Rinpoche:* In the first place, the enemy won't praise you. The enemy only criticises you.

*Ven Gyurme:* Sometimes they do. They do it out of a bad motivation. They want something from you.

*Khen Rinpoche:* When you know that, the praise doesn't become praise to you. That praising becomes 'un-praising'.

The problem is when you heard that 'praise' from the enemy, you don't like it. That doesn't mean you don't like being praised. But when the enemy praises you, you already know it is not really praise so you are already unhappy about it. You know the person is criticising you indirectly. You don't think, "He is praising me."

*Ven Gyurme:* But we still like that because if the enemy praises me in front of other people, I look good. I know what he is doing but I still look good. Other people don't know what is really going on. That is what we think.

*Khen Rinpoche:* I don't think so. If you don't know whether the person is really praising you or not then maybe you may feel happy.

But if your mind is already thinking, "That person is not really praising me from his heart, only with his mouth," then I don't think you will feel happy. You will think, "What you are saying is not true, i.e., not sincere, so why are you doing that?"

Interpreted by Ven. Tenzin Gyurme; transcribed by Phuah Soon Ek, Patricia Lee & Julia Koh; edited by Cecilia Tsong.