

# Shantideva – *The Way of the Bodhisattva*

## Chapter Six, Patience

### Preface

Shantideva's *The Way of the Bodhisattva* (hereafter referred to as "*The Way*") is one of the seminal or root texts in Tibetan Buddhism, and the sixth chapter on patience is perhaps the most quoted, revered and studied chapter of the scripture. Shantideva (683 CE-763 CE) was a deeply renowned scholar monk at Nalanda University, the most celebrated Buddhist center of learning in ancient India.

Our goal here is to write a short, accessible commentary. We have used David Karma Choephel's 2021 translation (*Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva*: Shambhala Publications 2021), with some minor edits. We have also leaned on his commentary (included with his translation) as an interpretive resource, and have also used other commentaries as well as our own observations to inform this commentary. Especially of note is an earlier translation of Shantideva's poem by the Padmakara Translation Group (*The Way of the Bodhisattva*: Shambhala Classics 2006), which reads more fluidly and accessibly than Choephel's translation, and so is recommended for any English-speaker looking to engage with Shantideva's text.

We have excluded myths and legends of Shantideva's life, the metaphysical elements (such as those about past and future lives), and the elaborate use of metaphors and magical beings as these elements lack the relevance that they had in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and they would have been cumbersome for today's readers.

The original text of *The Way* was written as a poem, using rhythm and meter to emphasize and aid in understanding the meaning of each verse. Shorter lines indicating less gravitas and longer lines more seriousness, for example. Here, the translation is mostly unrhymed, unmetred verse, making the text clearer than earlier translations. Also, bear in mind that this is not an exegesis; the commentary is on the essence of the verses not on each word and line.

As to its style, *The Way* is an interesting mix of deep explorations of the concept of emptiness and other dharma, mixed with repetitive (or, more nicely, iterative) moral exhortation, as well as responses to then-contemporary critiques of Shantideva's arguments from other Buddhist traditions. These literary goals frequently change verse-to-verse, or even within verses, making *The Way* unique among the texts explored on *deepdharma.org*, which generally stick to "straight philosophy," (see, e.g., Nagarjuna's *MMK*, Vasubandhu's *Trisvabhavanirdesha*), responses to critics (see, e.g., Nagarjuna's *12 Gates Treatise*), psychological explorations (see, e.g., Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosa*), poetic/literary works (see, e.g., Shi Tou's *Inside the Grass Hut*, Dogen's *108 Dharma Gates*), or guides to practice (see, e.g., Bodhidharma's *Outline of Practice*). *The Way* contains intermixed elements similar to those more deeply explored in all of these works.

This commentary is divided into two sections preceded by a short introduction. The first is the complete uninterrupted text; the second is our commentary on each verse. Most commentaries group the verses where there seems to be a common theme, here we explain each verse separately to give the reader a greater sense of what and how Shantideva is writing.

We suggest you read this commentary in the order in which it is presented—the preface, the introduction, then the text, with the provided verse by verse commentary. We also note that, unlike many other foundational Buddhist texts, *The Way* is a genuinely inspirational text that is delightfully readable. In addition, and indicative of its profound nature, it has layers of meaning that show themselves the more closely one pays attention.

## Introduction

### *Patience in a Summary Paragraph*

The alternatives to patience form a spectrum of wasted energy from irritation and frustration to anger, hatred, and fury. Such a waste—all the result of trying to force ourselves and others to change rather than allowing the people and events of our everyday life to “just be.” *Patience is being fully engaged, without our stories clouding our vision.* Simple persistent and consistent effort is needed for patience to replace the neediness of our anger, greed, and delusion. What we realize from practicing with patience is that patience is the pathway to a liberated life.

### *Patience, Briefly Put*

We generally define patience as the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering. *This, obviously, assumes that there are things to which we should feel aversive,* that there are people, places, things and thoughts that intrinsically and autonomously, even intentionally and deliberately, cause us to be uncomfortable. *But common sense tells us that can't be true,* otherwise the sound of an electric drill, for example, would be annoying to everyone, like it is to my mother, but obviously this is not the case, ask any carpenter. My neighbor's deafening Harley-Davidson is annoying to me, but he loves it.

The traditional, two-millennia old Buddhist understanding of *patience is that patience is simply the ability to be mindfully present, prudent, and aware of whatever is happening, without adding an affinity or an aversion, without adding any affective embellishment.* Shantideva explains that there are three types of patience that we should have: (1) patience with perceived suffering, (2) the patience to contemplate the dharma, and (3) the patience when confronted with people, places, and events we deem harmful. There are other lists defining times we need to be diligent in practicing patience, such as (1) when our mind tells us we are experiencing suffering, hardship, or disappointment, (2) when external events seem to be threatening and attacking us, (3) and

when we feel harmed or criticized by others. For this commentary, however, we will be following Shantideva's list.

It should be noted that patience reflects our karma, karma being the imprints in our mind (the "alaya consciousness") that inform us as to how to respond to perceived sufferings and injustices. This is why it is so important to diligently and consistently reinforce ourselves with patient responses of body, speech, and mind when any of the many sources of anger arise in our less than wholesome narratives. We can thereby establish our karma, our pre-conditions to react, in the direction of mindful presence rather than reactive affinity or aversion. (See [www.deepdharma.org](http://www.deepdharma.org) for many more commentaries and practice guides related to the concept of karma.)

Practicing with patience is a form of character building. It is a skill that needs to be developed to stay on track toward a more peaceful, less anxious and stressed life—on track even under seemingly threatening conditions.

This does *not* mean we become passive, does not mean that we flat line an experience, and does not mean everything that happens is "okay." Rather, it means we develop a mindfulness practice allowing us to manage seemingly provocative situations without anger or stress.

There are a number of unconvincing modern arguments, usually based around collective or social justice, that suggest this is impossible, that suggest in the face of some personal insults or attacks, or threats, the proper mindfulness response is to be angry, strong-minded, even violent. "Not so!" we are suggesting here, from a deeply mindful perspective. "Not so" says Shantideva.

*Being patient is not the equivalent of inaction. If it is possible to remedy the situation, then of course we should— but to do this we do not need to become upset or stressed or angry. Simple awareness is all we need.* In fact, the training to avoid emotionally-driven reactivity allows us the mental space to truly analyze whether certain actions/reactions are appropriately compassionate.

The traditional Eastern (Asian) way to train for patience, in which we learn to allow, even troubling and painful events to happen, without believing we must become upset, is with a meditation and mindfulness practice.

Instead of responding with anger, we should examine the situation. *We should not become angry just because things do not go our way, or things seem difficult.* The aim of a patience practice is

needed most when we fail to accept reality for what it is, when we editorialize that we are being threatened or are under attack, rather than accepting the conditions just as they are, with clear-sightedness. Lessening and managing anger is not the end point. The point is to patiently accept things as they are so that anger doesn't arise.

"Anger management," is an oxymoron. The point of a patience practice is not getting angry, rather than getting angry and having to find ways to manage it! When we seriously ponder the value of a patience practice, we see how it is the superhighway to liberation.

## Bodhisattva, a Quick Definition

This text is the who, what, when, where, and how to become an enlightened being, a Bodhisattva. Patience is a key virtue of a bodhisattva, and thus the reason for this extended commentary.

But what is a Bodhisattva? Originally, a Bodhisattva was the honorific given to Shakyamuni Buddha. *Bodhi* means enlightened and *sattva* means being. Over the centuries after Shakyamuni`s death, it became the title for anyone who was a Buddha, meaning anyone who was enlightened and who was committed to being someone who lives for the benefit of others, a completely other-centered practitioner. Today the terms are used very broadly and loosely to indicate anyone who practices the Buddhist path.

There are also some imaginary beings who are called Bodhisattvas, such as Avalokiteshvara (Kuan Yin in Chinese), who represents compassion; she magically hangs out in this world to answer the cries of the suffering. In many sects of Buddhism, members pray to her for help when they are suffering and expect resolution of their dilemma in response to their prayers and offerings. Manjushri is another imaginary “Bodhisattva”; he represents wisdom. There are others, a baker`s dozen at least, but you get the point. The pantheon on imaginary beings who can perform miracles for those who pray to them is strongest in Tibetan Buddhism even though it makes no sense in terms of Buddhism`s key doctrines, such as No-Self and emptiness.

## *The Way of the Bodhisattva*

Translation by Kenpo David Karma Choephel

(1) One moment`s anger shatters all  
Good acts accumulated  
In a thousand eons, such as the giving  
Or offerings to the Buddhas

(2) There is no misdeed like anger  
No austerity like patience,  
So cultivate assiduously  
Patience in its various ways.

(3) When pangs of anger clutch the mind  
We do not feel any peace:  
No joy, no comfort, no sleep  
And no constancy can be had.

(4) Even though he has shown them favor  
With riches and respect,  
Dependents will confront and kill  
A master filled with anger.

(5) He will distress his friends and kin  
Even those gathered with gifts and open hearts of service.  
In brief, there is nothing  
That makes the angry happy.

(6) The enemy anger will create  
Sufferings such as such as greed and delusion.  
Those bent on overcoming anger  
Are able to be happy here and anywhere.

(7) When I do not want what is done,  
Or my desires are blocked,  
Displeasure will then fuel my anger  
Which will grow to destroy me

(8) Thus I`ll destroy the sustenance  
Of this, my nemesis.  
Other than causing harm to me,  
This enemy has no function.

(9) Whatever happens I will not

Upset my cheerfulness.  
Displeasure won't fulfill my wishes  
But strip away my virtues.

(10) If something can be fixed, what need  
Is there to be displeased?  
If something can't be fixed, what good  
Is it to be displeased?

(11) We don't want pain, humiliation,  
Insults, or disrepute,  
Either for us or for our friends.  
It's the opposite for our foes.

(12) The causes of happiness are rare  
The causes of pain are frequent  
Without pain, there's no wish for freedom,  
So, mind, you must be steadfast.

(13) The Durga cults and Karnatans\*  
Pointlessly bear the sensations  
Of burns and wounds, so why am I  
A coward for freedom's sake?

\* These are cults of the Hindu gods Devi and Shiva, respectively.

(14) There's nothing at all that is not easy  
If you are used to it.  
By getting used to minor pains  
You'll bear great harms as well

(15) Don't I see this with pointless pains  
Of serpents and mosquitos,  
Of feelings of hunger, thirst, and such,  
And rashes and so forth?

(16) Thus I won't be thin-skinned about  
Heat, cold, and wind and rain,  
Or illness, bondage, beatings, and such—  
Being so makes them worse.

(17) Some, seeing their own blood, become  
Exceptionally courageous.  
And some, on seeing another's blood,  
Will faint and fall unconscious.

(18) This is from steadfastness of mind

Or else from cowardice.  
Thus disregard the injuries—  
Do not let pains affect you.

(19) Though pain occurs, the wise do not  
Disturb their joy of mind.  
When waging war against afflictions,  
Harm `s plentiful in battle.

(20) Triumphant heroes are they who  
Ignore all pain and quash  
Anger, hatred, and such—the enemy.  
Everyone else kills corpses.

(21) Plus, suffering has benefits:  
Weariness dispels arrogance.  
Compassion arises for the samsaric.  
Shunning misdeeds, you delight in virtue.

(22) We don `t ` get angry at bile and such,  
Great sources of suffering.  
So why be angry at the sentient?  
Conditions provoke them too.

(23) Just as such illnesses occur  
Involuntarily,  
Afflictions are compelled to arise  
Involuntarily.

(24) Though people don `t think, “I `ll get angry,”  
The commonplace angers them.  
Though they don `t think, “I shall arouse it,”  
Their fury still arises.

(25) All the offenses that there are,  
All manifold misdeeds,  
Occur because of their conditions—  
They have no self-control.

(26) And the assembly of conditions  
Has no thought “I `ll produce,”  
Nor does what it produces have  
The thought “I `ll be produced.”

(27) The primal substance that they claim  
And Self that they imagine

Do not think, "I will come to be,"  
And arise intentionally.

(28) Without arising, they don't exist—  
What then would want to arise?  
Always distracted by an object,  
I also would never cease.

(29) If permanent, the Self, like space,  
Would clearly have no action  
When it encounters other conditions,  
What acts on the unchanging?

(30) If during the action, it's like before  
What does the action do to it?  
If you say, "This is what acts on it,"  
What is it that's related?

(31) In this way, everything's dependent  
And thus has no control.  
When you know that, you won't get angry  
At any illusory thing.

(32) "Who averts what? Even averting  
Would be illogical."  
It's logical to say suffering  
Will cease, dependent on that.

(33) Thus when you see a friend or foe  
Acting improperly,  
Think happily that this occurred  
Because of such conditions.

(34) If things were accomplished by free-will,  
No living being at all  
Would ever have any suffering,  
For no one wants to suffer.

(35) They injure themselves by being careless  
Of thorns, et cetera.  
From lust, they starve themselves and such  
For the sake of sex and the like.

(36) Some hang themselves or jump from cliffs,  
Take poison or eat poorly.  
Or behave unmeritoriously,

Causing themselves harm.

(37) When overcome by the afflictions  
They`ll kill their own dear Selves.  
At such a time, how would they not  
Cause harm to others` bodies?

(38) Though rarely do we feel compassion  
For those who kill themselves  
And so forth when afflictions arise.  
What good is getting angry?

(39) If causing harm to others is  
The nature of the childish,  
Anger at them is as senseless as  
Resenting fire for heat.

(40) But if the fault is adventitious  
And beings` natures are gentle  
Anger at them would not be right,  
Like begrudging the sky for wafting smoke.

(41) If I, ignoring the main thing—  
The stick—get angry at the wielder,  
Who is impelled by ire, it`s right  
To get incensed by hatred.

(42) I, in the past, have caused such harms  
To other sentient beings,  
So it is right that these ills occur  
To me who have hurt beings.

(43) Their weapons and my body both  
Are causes of suffering.  
They wield the weapons, I the body.  
With whom should I get angry?

(44) Blinded by craving, I have grasped  
This human body-like blister  
That, prone to pain, can`t bear being touched.  
Whom to get mad at when it`s hurt?

(45) The childish don`t want suffering,  
But thirst for suffering`s causes.  
Can I resent another being  
When harmed by my own wrongs?

(46) If like the guardians of hell  
And like the sword-leaf forests,\*  
This is produced by my own actions,  
At whom should I get angry?

\* “The sword-leaf forests are a specific hell where one seeks refuge in a forest from the heat and packs of wild dogs only to be sliced by the sharp blades on the leaves of the trees.” Description from Choephel.

(47) If those who, goaded by my karma,  
Appear and do me harm  
Should go to hell because of that,  
Have I not brought them to ruin?

(48) Because of them, I`ll purify  
My many misdeeds through patience.  
Because of me, they`ll go to hell`s  
Long-lasting agonies.

(49) If I am causing harm to them  
While they are helping me,  
Why, O cruel mind, do you get angry  
Mistakenly at them.

(50) If I`ve the quality of intention  
I will not go to hell,  
And what can happen to them now  
If I protect myself?

(51) But if I harm them in return,  
They will not be protected  
While my conduct is debased;  
Austerity destroyed

(52) Because the mind`s not physical,  
No one can wound it at all.  
Because of fixation on the body  
The body is harmed by pain.

(53) Contemptuousness, abusive speech,  
And words that are unpleasant  
Inflict no harm upon the body.  
Mind, why do they incense you?

(54) Displeasure others show for me  
Will not devour me  
In this or in another life.

So why do I dislike it?

(55) Though I do not want that because  
It blocks material gain  
I'll leave my things behind me here,  
While wrongs will long remain

(56) It's better I die now than live  
Long with wrong livelihood.  
Even if I were to live for long  
The pain of death's the same.

(57) Someone feels bliss a hundred years  
In a dream and then wakes up.  
Another experiences bliss  
A moment and then wakes up.

(58) For either of the two who wake,  
That bliss will never return.  
A long life and a short life both  
Are finished when we die.

(59) Though we acquire many things  
And enjoy them a long time,  
We will go as if robbed by bandits—  
Naked and empty-handed.

(60) If I live off my gains to abate  
My wrongs and practice virtue,  
Won't anger for the sake of goods  
Waste virtue and be a wrong?

(61) And if the purpose of my living  
Itself should be debased,  
What good's this life when all I do  
Is commit misdeeds?

(62) Those who disparage you harm beings  
So you get angry, you say.  
Why don't you also get upset  
When others are disparaged?

(63) If losing faith depends on others  
So you forgive the faithless,  
Afflictions depend on conditions,  
So why not forgive your critics?

(64) It`s not right to get angry at those  
Who insult or destroy  
Statues, stupas, and the true dharma—  
The Buddhas and such aren`t harmed.

(65) As taught above, see those who harm  
Your master, kin, and friends  
As doing so from circumstances  
And thus stave off your anger.

(66) If both the sentient and nonsentient  
Cause harm to living beings,  
Why single out and resent the sentient?  
Forbear their harms instead.

(67) Some, being ignorant, do wrong.  
Some, being ignorant, get angry  
What would make either innocent?  
Which of the two is guilty?

(68) Why in the past did they do acts  
That would make others harm them?  
Since everything depends on karma,  
Why hold a grudge for the other?

(69) Realizing this, no matter what,  
I will endeavor at merits  
So everyone will come to have  
Mutually loving thoughts.

(70) When fire that has burned one house  
Spreads to another home  
You gather up and throw away  
The straw and such that fuel it.

(71) Likewise throw away instantly  
Whatever you`re attached to  
That fuels the fires of anger and hatred, fearing  
They will consume your merit.

(72) What`s wrong, if someone condemned to death,  
Their hand cut off, if freed?  
What`s wrong with human suffering  
Removing you from the hells?

(73) If I cannot bear this amount  
Of suffering in the present,  
Why then do I not stop my anger,  
Cause of hell`s agonies?

(74) For sake of desire, a thousand times  
I have experienced  
Being burned and such in hell but done  
No good for myself or others

(75) But this is not the great harm,  
And a great aim will be accomplished.  
It`s right to only be delighted  
At pains that dispel harm to beings.

(76) If others are pleased when they praise someone  
As have qualities,  
Why then, O mind, do you not as well  
Praise them and take delight?

(77) Your pleasure from rejoicing is  
A blameless source of delight  
Allowing by those with qualities—  
The best way to gather others.

(78) “But others will be happy too.”  
If you don`t want this joy,  
You`ve stopped paying wages and will this  
Destroy the seen and unseen.

(79) When yours are the qualities described  
You want that others be pleased.  
When others` qualities are described,  
You don`t want to be pleased yourself.

(80) If you aroused bodhicitta\* because  
You want all being to be happy,  
When beings find themselves happiness,  
Why does that make you angry?

\* The mind of a practitioner that strives toward liberation, guided by empathy and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings.

(81) If you want for beings the Buddhahood  
Adored in the three worlds\*  
Why does it gall you so to see

Them have paltry honor?

\* Buddhist cosmology adopts an ancient Aryan conception of the world having three strata or layers (earth, atmosphere, and sky) and renames these as the Desire Realm, the Form Realm, and the Formless Realm.

(82) If a relative whom you support—  
Someone to whom you give—  
Should gain a livelihood, would you  
Be angry instead of pleased?

(83) If you don't want, even for that being,  
How can you wish them enlightenment?  
If you are irked by others wealth,  
How can you have bodhicitta?

(84) If they get something or it remains  
Inside the patron's house,  
In either case, it is not yours.  
Given or not, why care?

(85) Why do you throw away your merits,  
Your faith and qualities?  
Tell why you're not angry at the one  
Who doesn't hold on to their gains.

(86) Do you not only feel no sorrow  
For the wrongs you've done yourself  
But also want to vie against  
Those who have performed merit?

(87) Even when enemies are displeased,  
What's there for you to enjoy?  
The wishes in your mind along  
Won't cause them any harm.

(88) How would it please you to accomplish  
The pain you wish for them?  
You say you would be satisfied—  
What greater ruin than that?

(89) Unbearably sharp, the hook cast by  
The fisherman, afflictions.  
Caught on it, surely I'll be cooked  
In cauldrons by hell's keepers

(90) Praise, fame, and honor will not beget  
Merit or long life.

They will not bring me strength, good health,  
Or physical well-being

(91) If I know what is good for me,  
What `s good for me in those?  
If all you want is mental pleasure,  
Use drink and dice and such.

(92) For sake of fame, some squander wealth  
Or even get themselves killed.  
What use are words? When you are dead,  
Who will they make happy?

(93) When their sandcastles are destroyed,  
Children wail in distress.  
Likewise when I lose praise and fame,  
My mind is like a child`s.

(94) Words have no mind; for them to wish  
To praise me is impossible.  
Though hearing that another likes me  
May be a cause of pleasure.

(95) What good does someone else`s fondness  
For me or another do me?  
That like and pleasure is their own;  
I won`t get even a bit.

(96) If their being happy makes me pleased,  
I should be so for all.  
Why aren`t I pleased when they`re made happy  
By their love for another?

(97) Therefore my pleasure that arises  
When I am being praised  
Is irrational and nothing more  
Than just a child`s behavior.

(98) Praise and so forth bring distraction,  
Destroy world weariness,  
Cause envy of those with qualities,  
And ruin prosperity.

(99) So haven`t those who lurk nearby  
To wreck my acclaim and such  
Come to protect me against falling

Into the lower realms.\*

\* The three lower realms are the realms of animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. (The three upper realms are gods, titans, and humans.)

(100) What need have I, who seek liberation,  
Of the fetters, gain and respect?  
And why should I get angry at those  
Who release me when I am bound?

(101) When I want to rush into suffering,  
How is it I get angry  
At those who, as if blessed by the Buddha,  
Don't let me, blocking the way?

(102) It makes no sense to get angry at those  
Who I think thwart my merit.  
If there's no austerity like patience,  
Should I not dwell in that?

(103) If I cannot be patient with them  
Because of my own faults,  
Then all I've done is block the cause  
Of merit that was at hand

(104) If the cause of something is that which  
If absent, it won't be,  
And with which, it will come to be  
How is that called an obstruction?

(105) A beggar appearing at the right time  
Does not prevent your giving  
It is not right to say your abbot  
Stopped you from going forth.

(106) Though there are beggars in this world,  
Those who cause harm are rare,  
For if you do no harm to others,  
No one will harm you back.

(107) Therefore just like a trove appearing  
Painlessly in a home,  
I will delight in enemies,  
My friends in enlightened conduct.

(108) Since they and I created it  
It's right to give the fruits

Of patience to my enemies first,  
For they`re the cause of patience.

(109) If enemies deserve no honor  
Since they`ve no thought to make you patient,  
Why would you honor the true dharma,  
The cause of accomplishment?

(110) Though you won`t honor your enemies  
Because they want to harm you,  
If they, like doctors, wished to help,  
How could they make you patient?

(111) Thus since malevolent intent  
Is what produces patience,  
Just they are the cause of patience and worthy  
Of veneration, like true dharma.

(112) There are fields of sentient beings  
And victors, said the Sage.  
Many who have respected them  
Have gone beyond to perfection.

(113) A Buddha`s qualities are gained  
From beings and Buddhas alike.  
How is it right to have respect  
For victors but not beings?

(114) It`s not from qualities of intention  
But due to the results  
That beings have qualities like theirs  
And therefore are their equals.

(115) Offering to those with lovingkindness  
Is sentient beings` greatness  
The merit of having faith in the Buddhas  
Is the Buddhas` greatness.

(116) For gaining a Buddha`s traits, they have  
A part and are thus equal.  
Infinite oceans of qualities,  
The Buddhas are equaled by no one.

(117) Offering even the three realms  
To those who appear to have  
A tiny share of the qualities

Of those who are the unique  
Collection of sublime qualities  
Would be inadequate.

(118) Since beings have a part in the birth  
Of a Buddha`s supreme traits,  
They are similar to that extent  
And thus deserve veneration.

(119) Other than pleasing sentient beings,  
What way is there to repay  
Those stalwart friends who act to bring  
Immeasurable benefit?

(120) Since helping them repay those who forsake  
Their bodies and go to the Incessant Hell,  
Even when they inflict on you great harm,  
Make all your actions solely excellent.

(121) Meanwhile, how is it I—an ignoramus—  
Am prideful and don`t act like a true servant  
To those for whose sake they who are my lords  
Have disregarded even their own bodies?

(122) Making them happy, whose happiness delights  
And injuries distress the lords of sages,  
Brings all the lords of sages gratification,  
While harming them brings injury to the sages.

(123) Just as no object of desire will bring  
Happiness when your body is on fire,  
If you harm sentient beings, there is no way  
That those with great compassion could be pleased.

(124) Therefore I now confess all my misdeeds  
Which, as they have caused harm to sentient beings,  
Distress all those endowed with great compassion.  
May all those whom I have displeased forgive me.

(125) To please the tathagatas (buddhas), from today onward  
I shall be the world`s slave. I won`t strike back.  
No matter how many people stomp my crown  
Or kill me. Guardians of the world, be happy!

(126) There`s no doubt they whose nature is compassion  
Regard all of these being as themselves

Those who are seen as sentient beings in nature  
Are guardians in essence—why disrespect them?

(127) Just this is what will please the tathagatas.  
Just this is what fulfills my own aims.  
Just this dispels the suffering of the world,  
And therefore I will always do just this.

(128) Just as, when one of the king`s men  
Wreaks havoc on many people,  
Even if able, the farsighted  
Do not retaliate

(129) For he is not alone—his forces  
Are the forces of the king—  
Likewise do not look down upon  
Weak people who cause harm,

(130) For theirs are the forces of hell`s keepers  
And of the compassionate.  
Just as his subjects propitiate  
A tyrant, respect beings.

(131) Even if angered, could a king  
Inflict what is experienced  
Because of making beings despair—  
The agonies of hell?

(132) Even if pleased, a king could not  
Provide what is achieved  
By making sentient beings happy—  
Buddahood itself.

(133) Leave future Buddahood aside,  
Do you not see in this life  
That pleasing sentient beings brings  
Much glory, fame, and joy?

(134) While in samsara, patience brings  
Beauty and so forth,  
Good health, prestige, a verry long life  
And a chakravarti`s\* pleasures.

\* In Buddhism, a chakravarti is the secular equivalent of a Buddha, meaning a king or ideal universal ruler, particularly of the entire Indian subcontinent.

*Opening line of chapter seven, bringing Chapter Six to a close:*

**Thus with patience, be diligent.**

### *Commentary*

This is the opening verse (1) of Chapter Six on Patience:

(1) One moment`s anger shatters all  
Good acts accumulated  
In a thousand eons, such as the giving  
Or offerings to the Buddhas

It is one of the most often quoted verses in the entire text. For that reason, it is worth looking at another translation—by the Padmakara Translation group:

All the good works gathered in a thousand ages  
Such as deeds of generosity,  
And offerings to the Blissful Ones—  
A single flash of anger shatters them.

Indeed, as we all know, anger can be an extraordinarily destructive force. A burst of anger, losing one`s temper, even just once, can undo years of generosity and kindness, be it with a family member, a boss, a neighbor, whomever. A long life of kindness and generosity can be destroyed by a single angry explosion. It is for this reason that Shantideva takes such a strong stand against us being angry right out of the gate. Indeed, people have been jettisoned from their families, fired from their jobs, isolated from their neighbors, and all because of a single strong, angry outburst—one moment`s anger, a single flash of anger. From a karmic perspective, we have also all experienced the heavy imprint of anger in our emotional outlook, and the obsessiveness that often accompanies angry thoughts – evidence of the strength of these imprints in our karmic storehouses, and their self-reinforcing nature.

For example, a trainer at Carl`s gym exploded at a member for being on a machine he wanted to use. The explosion, to everyone`s shock, was loud, abusive, and profane. The member responded by quietly packing his gym bag, going to the front desk, and resigning. The manager of the gym fired the trainer for exploding. Carl never saw the trainer or the client at the gym again.

In Verse 1, Shantideva mentions that a key character trait of a bodhisatva is generosity. In the next verse (2), he reasserts the importance of a generosity practice, then says we should assiduously cultivate patience. Patience is the antidote to anger—the most destructive of emotions

and the cause of deleterious responses to the people, places, things, and events of everyday life with which we are dissatisfied.

(2) There is no misdeed like anger  
No austerity like patience,  
So cultivate assiduously  
Patience in its various ways.

For a bodhisattva, training in patience is a key to succeeding in overcoming anger in its many forms, from mild irritation and annoyance to anger, loathing and hatred. Without a patience practice, without learning to respond to even mild annoyances without frustration and anger, we can never hope to achieve the mind of a bodhisattva, a mind of peacefulness and lovingkindness that pushes us to act, not self-centeredly, but for the benefit of all beings. The way for a bodhisattva, the way to liberation, is paved with patience and grounded in compassion. When Shantideva says that there is “no austerity like patience,” one of the things he means is that patience yields the most “bang for the buck” for the focus invested; it is the most fruitful way to exert your self-discipline.

(3) When pangs of anger clutch the mind  
We do not feel any peace:  
No joy, no comfort, no sleep  
And no constancy can be had.

Here in Verse Three there’s a slight shift in tone, from a dire warning to a gentle reminder of the troubles caused by not being patient and compassionate when faced with anger. Shantideva explains that when we are in the grips of anger, when enmity takes over our mind, joy and peace, comfort and ease, even sleep become difficult, thus preventing us from minimizing or eliminating suffering. When this happens, there is no constancy, faithfulness is lost, and we sink into the mire of hostility, a swamp that overwhelms our karma with unwholesome motivations.

(4) Even though he has shown them favor  
With riches and respect,  
Dependents will confront and kill  
A master filled with anger.

At one time or another, we have all heard someone say, or we ourselves have said, “I’m so angry I can’t see straight.” So not only are we lacking in patience and compassion in those moments, but we have asserted a Cause-and-Effect event to be happening, making peacefulness impossible. In these circumstances, we have also admitted that we have rendered ourselves incapable of reflecting rationally on the situation; as a friend says, “lose temper lose credibility.”

In a somewhat colloquial way (rather than the tightly knit poetic style of *The Way*), Shantideva points out here that no matter how good we are to others, no matter how much we share riches and respect with them, an angry-hearted master will be disliked and in such disfavor that he may find his family, friends, and even employees harbor a desire for his death. In fact, those filled with enmity live in fear of retribution from those who have felt the sting of angry outbursts.

Today we are unlikely to kill a nasty boss, but we certainly are willing to sabotage him and his goals.

(5) He will distress his friends and kin  
Even those gathered with gifts and open hearts of service.  
In brief, there is nothing  
That makes the angry happy.

Shantideva concludes these last three verses with Verse Five in which he explains that no matter how much one tries, there is no way for an angry practitioner to find peace and to be happy. Anger is just too formidable and the hostility and aggression that arises from it too dominant.

We all know people who rant angrily at what they perceive as injustices done to them, like not being able to get a doctor`s appointment or auto repair appointment as fast as they want, or worse, like being ticketed for speeding (“I was only doing 10 miles over the limit, lots of people were going faster, that cop shouldn`t have stopped me, and I told him so. That`s when I got the ticket for speeding, and when I told the cop what I thought of him, he gave me another ticket for reckless driving.”)

These people are never satisfied with things as they are, with things “just so.” These people are so chronically angry that peace or happiness is completely denied to them. We all know someone like this, someone perpetually unsatisfied with things not going the way they expect and want. So they rant for years about how everything is wrong, is unfair, and how they are justified in their anger. These tortured “hell beings”<sup>1</sup> can`t see past their self-centeredness.

A woman in a class some years ago told the story about how she pulled out in front of a car, nearly colliding with it. She then explained that she stopped her car, walked to his window gave him a piece of her mind. He responded with a few choice words for her. When I asked if I understood that she was the one who cut off this man, she said, “Yes, but who did he think he was to treat me like that!” Narcissism it seems is a cousin of anger.

(6) The enemy anger will create  
Sufferings such as such as greed and delusion.  
Those bent on overcoming anger  
Are able to be happy here and anywhere.

Here Shantideva is expressing two points: (1) Anger robs us of a peaceful mind, and (2) Overcoming anger (by having a patience practice) is the path to a liberated life, free of angst and full of patience and ease in response to whatever is happening, noting that what appears to be

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Buddhist cosmology, the players run the gamut from gods to hell beings. Hell being are deeply tortured beings, dominated by anxiety, hopelessness, and a sense of being trapped. They are despairing and desperate. They are overwhelmed by anger and rage. They are people with no ability to see their own responsibility for their hell-state; all they can see the overwhelming sense of their anger.

happening are simply perceived injustices, not valid sources of anger and aversion. In fact, the perceived injustices lead us to the suffering from our neediness, our “greed and delusion.”

For some people, even getting what they want makes them angry. A neighbor in Carl’s apartment complex, who was always on the battlefield with the landlord, was screaming at him about something or other and finally yelled, “I want out of this lease.” The landlord said, “Fine, you have 30 days to vacate.” She told me she was furious, “Where does he get off telling me how long I have to find another place to live.” Still enraged, even after getting what she wanted.

This may all (Verses 1 through 6) seem obvious: an explosive temper tantrum can destroy a warm and healthy, even deeply loving relationship, and omnipresent anger pushes us into being hell beings, tortured by our angst and its attendant behaviors, with very little chance for a peaceful life. A patience practice is the way to overcome the unnecessary and destructive anger.

While it may seem obvious, when Carl talks to his students and clients, it seems they rarely if ever have a patience practice. Instead, they are trapped in a world of anger and greed, deluded into believing anger is appropriate when things don’t go their way. And this is what Shantideva is trying to steer us away from—away from anger toward patience, compassion, and generosity.

(7) When I do not want what is done,  
Or my desires are blocked,  
Displeasure will then fuel my anger  
Which will grow to destroy me

A story of not getting what we desire, getting what we don’t want, not being able to rid ourself of what we deem undesirable, these are the conditions that cause us to be angry, ultimately destroying our efforts at being patient.

(8) Thus I’ll destroy the sustenance  
Of this, my nemesis.  
Other than causing harm to me,  
This enemy has no function.

When we get what we don’t want, when conditions we deem aversive occur, our aversion acts to destroy our calm. The anger that fuels our deluded mind begets anger, anger, anger. Anger serves no useful function and feeds our nemeses (greed, anger delusion) rather than a patience practice which would nourish our character traits of patience and its companions, compassion and generosity.

(9) Whatever happens I will not  
Upset my cheerfulness.  
Displeasure won’t fulfill my wishes  
But strip away my virtues.

Shantideva here is suggesting we try to maintain a positive attitude, a sense of cheerfulness, in the face of difficulties. But it is not enough to just put on a happy face. We need to examine the

events that are leading to the aversion and, with a gentle sense of regret develop new strategies and karmic imprints that lead us to patience, patience with a diligent practice. We also need to be quiet, to be silent when we're really angry, because anything you say is likely to come out wrong, to come out angrily, not patiently.

In the final two lines of Verse 9 Shantideva explains that dissatisfaction with getting things we find undesirable strips away our virtues, cataloged as the twenty mindstates of Asanga and Vasubandhu, as follows:

### The 9 Calming Mindstates

1. **Generosity** –This is the practice of giving simply because there is need. Giving without asking *anything* in return. With time and practice, gift and giver and receiver become undistinguished; then there is never again a need to take. The three types of giving are (1) material, (2) spiritual, and (3) the giving of no-fear.
2. **Compassion** –When our self-centeredness, our desire to get our way, lessens, compassion appears naturally and on its own to guide us. Compassion is what makes us safe and strong, not meek or weak nor easy to manipulate.
3. **Patience** – Patience is being present with whatever is happening, in an aware but non-judgmental way. It is looking clearly without filtering events through our old habitual responses and stories, and then acting appropriately from the deep understanding that awareness provides.
4. **Humility and Modesty** – Not needing to assert ourselves over others, not needing our story to be right, not having to have our opinions validated, not really having opinions, that`s what makes us humble and modest. That is the ground on which peace of mind is centered. This is where real strength of character comes from.
5. **Moral Restraint** – Once we start lying to ourselves and telling ourselves it is alright to do things we know are wrong, we become more and more corrupted in our relationships with others and more and more perverted in our view of what we can do. Moral restraint, moral discipline, is what guides us when there is doubt, when old unhelpful habits rear their heads.
6. **Truthfulness** – Truthfulness is the foundation of a peaceful life. Lying to others is never beneficial. Worse than just making us lie in the future, it trains us to live in a world of wrong views, wrong intentions, and wrong actions.
7. **Dependability** – Without dependability there can never be peace of mind, in us, for us, about us, and about those with whom we interact.

*Usually seen as negatives, 8 and 9 here are viewed as positive mindstates here.*

8. **Regret** –This gently judgmental but lightweight mindstate is what prevents us from falling into the pit of guilt. Regret reminds us that we need to change strategies. It is a gentle, “oops.” That keeps us on the right track.

9. **Distaste** – Developing a mild aversion to all that is unwholesome in body, speech and mind, is a critical component of wisdom. Without it we can misuse our practice and, for example, use it to become better killers, better ninjas or warriors or thieves.

### The 11 Virtuous Mental Qualities

1. **Sense of propriety** - Maintaining a sense of what is appropriate behavior and acting from that sensibility to stop negative actions and perform positive actions.
2. **Considerateness** - acting with decency, civility, and other-centeredness towards others. It is the basis for unspoiled moral discipline.
3. **Suppleness** - Flexibility that arises from practice and mindfulness. It enables the mind to engage in positive acts as wished, interrupting mental or physical rigidity.
4. **Equanimity** - The peacefulness and the inner sense of joy that arises from clear-mindedness, from not being dulled by old stories or overpowered by delusions about my self and self-need being prime and most important. Equanimity is always accompanied by compassion for the well-being of others.
5. **Conscientiousness** - Always being carefulness to avoid negative acts and to do, think and speak in ways that are beneficial
6. **Renunciation** / Renouncing old stories and attachment to unwholesome behaviors; more deeply, renunciation is about letting go of our attachment to self.
7. **Imperturbability** - No animosity toward or frustration with anything external, with peoples, places or events or situations; being present: alert, mindful and aware.
8. **Unbewildered clarity** - Understanding the meaning of things by seeing through the lens of open-minded wisdom, without the obstacles of our old stories
9. **Non-violence** – Being non-threatening, not making others fearful, and being non-violent in thought, speech, and action. Requires intention always set to being beneficial
10. **Enthusiasm** – Eagerness to continue that arises from seeing peacefulness arise from our practice.
11. **Faith** – The experience that these mindstates work as a path to a happier, healthier life leads us to “have faith” in them and to want to practice them with enthusiasm.

(10) If something can be fixed, what need  
Is there to be displeased?  
If something can` t be fixed, what good  
Is it to be displeased?

This tenth verse is another of the very often quoted verses of *The Way*. Shantideva is telling us that patience is not a grin-and-bear-it practice. It`s an explanation rather than an instruction (most of the verses up to this point have been instructive.)

Practicing with patience is a form of character building. It is a skill that needs to be developed to stay on track toward a more peaceful, less stressed life – on track even under threatening conditions, like we are face frequently.

This *does not mean* we become passive, *does not mean* that we flat-line an experience, and *does not mean* everything that happens is “okay,” as we stated in the introduction. Rather, it means we develop a prudent, mindfulness practice allowing us to manage seemingly provoking situations without stress or reactivity. In some psychotherapeutic circles, this is called “seeing bottom up,” in others it is called “resilience.”

There are several unconvincing modern Buddhist arguments, usually based around collective karma or social justice, that suggest this is impossible, that suggest in the face of some personal insults or attacks, or threats, the proper Buddhist response is to be angry, strong, even violent. “Not so!” Shantideva is suggesting here. “Not so” says Shantideva in this, the most quoted and profound Buddhist text on patience.

Being patient is not the equivalent of inaction, he further states. If it is possible to remedy the situation, then of course we should; but to do this we do not need to become upset or stressed or angry. Simple awareness is all we need, and our equanimity (lack of reactivity) can also help us to make sure that when we do act, it is out of compassion and is thus more likely to result in actual benefit, and at the very least will not accrue negative karma.

(11) We don't want pain, humiliation,  
Insults, or disrepute,  
Either for us or for our friends.  
It's the opposite for our foes.

In a class where we were discussing afflictions and unwholesome attitudes and behaviors, one student pointed out that we missed something she had seen in herself – glee at the suffering of someone she disliked! While all of us don't want “bad things” to happen to our friends and family, to those whom we like and love, we can also, as the student pointed out and as Shantideva says here, experience a sense of glee arising when something bad happens to someone we dislike. We are even likely to say, “they deserved it.”

When we explored this idea deeply, if we were honest, we noticed that most of us, at one time or another, felt gleeful at the suffering of another. Shantideva is waving his index finger at us here and saying this is a big no-no. This is not being patient. Ultimately, we don't want to wish suffering on anyone as, even if the suffering of the disliked provides a momentary thrill, ultimately it produces unproductive karmic imprints leading to the production of further negative internal narratives.

(12) The causes of happiness are rare  
The causes of pain are frequent  
Without pain, there's no wish for freedom,  
So, mind, you must be steadfast.

Patience, and its companions—compassion and generosity, Shantideva believes are relatively rare compared to greed, anger, and delusion, which cause suffering rather than satisfaction, ease, and happiness. But, if there were no dissatisfaction, there would be no wish for liberation. Thus we

need to be diligent and steadfast in watching our minds as they lead us from the unhappiness of the three poisons to easily coasting through life with a big patience smile and mind.

As a matter of fact, greed, anger and delusion are foundational affects that determine virtually everything we do. Sad but true. They arise from the second of the five aggregates where we assign one of them (via affinity or aversive feelings) to each sense contact we observe.

(13) The Durga cults and Karnatans\*  
Pointlessly bear the sensations  
Of burns and wounds, so why am I  
A coward for freedom`s sake?

\* These are cults of the Hindu gods Devi and Shiva, respectively; cults that were in common practice at the time Shantideva was writing this text, c. 700 CE.

As Choephel explains, the ancient Indian Durga cults believed that suffering was necessary as a prod to seek liberation, so they “burned their own limbs and otherwise harmed themselves to achieve liberation, [and] Karnatans from Southern India . . . were said to cut one another`s heads off during lunar eclipses in a quest for renown and rebirth in heaven.” Bearing perceived hardships, even gruesome and self-inflicted hardships, was thought to teach us to bear difficulties in the future. Self-immolation was practiced in protest of the Vietnam war and continues as a political protest practice to this day (e.g., Tibetans protesting Chinese occupation and Crimeans protesting forced deportation from their land) even though it contradicts the most fundamental vow in Buddhist– to do no harm. Shantideva throws down a challenge: if members of these groups can seek these extreme torments, how does the torment of practicing patience compare? Perhaps it is also difficult, but the payoff is much greater, walking the path of equanimity versus karmic reinforcement.

(14) There`s nothing at all that is not easy  
If you are used to it.  
By getting used to minor pains  
You`ll bear great harms as well

Learning to deal patiently with current perceived discomforts gives us a tool to deal with future discomforts and sufferings, whether perceived or “real.”

(15) Don`t I see this with pointless pains  
Of serpents and mosquitos,  
Of feelings of hunger, thirst, and such,  
And rashes and so forth?

In ancient times, agrarian times, we needed to be patient, Shantideva declared, with the pains of farming, like mosquitos, hunger and thirst, and rashes and the like, in the hope of reward in the future, whether here or in our next life. (Yes, Shantideva clearly believed in a next life!) Modern life is more comfortable, at least for the relatively well off, but still minor-to-medium torments persist abundantly.

(16) Thus I won't be thin-skinned about  
Heat, cold, and wind and rain,  
Or illness, bondage, beatings, and such—  
Being so makes them worse.

Further, Shantideva is telling us that the way of the Bodhisattva is not only to bear patiently “small” afflictions, but also the pangs of serious events, like monsoons and torture in a warring society, originally meaning a society with an absolute monarch and brutal, slave-like feudalism. Astonishingly, things today can be very similar—just think about the Indian caste system which recently resulted in the killing of an untouchable for drinking from the wrong well, decades of torture at Guantanamo and other black sites, Uigher concentration camps in China, the millions of casualties in various civil wars in the Congo, Syria, Rwanda and elsewhere, repression of women in many countries around the World, the list goes on. Life is suffering, and patience is the key tool to enable one to abide with the conditions resulting in the innumerable sufferings.

Even with all the modern conveniences to ease our lives, the bodhisattva of today, like the practitioner of ancient times, needs a thick-skin in the face of mass genocides and other horrors. This thick-skin, Shantideva points out, is made of patience.

The way of the bodhisattva, 1500 years after the death of the Shantideva and 2500 years after the death of the Buddha, still requires right effort toward patience. It is still littered with random shootings, domestic violence, and decade-long wars. It is not that we are unaware of the way of a bodhisattva, which many in Shantideva's time were, but rather that we choose to ignore being patient and compassionate, making life perilous. The way of the bodhisattva, according to Shantideva, need not be paved with perils and horrors. The better option is patience practiced diligently, even in the face of people and places and things for which we feel aversive.

(17) Some, seeing their own blood, become  
Exceptionally courageous.  
And some, on seeing another's blood,  
Will faint and fall unconscious.

Wartime imagery is typical in this poem, whether it is war against our greed or against a neighboring country. Here Shantideva is telling us that if we develop patience, we will be able to deal calmly and effectively even in the face of a blood bath, whether internal or external. It is normal to expect injuries in battle, but we need to realize that the great battle we face is with our own minds; it is the battle against anger. Blood or no blood, ours or someone else's, we lean into our patience practice to overcome the fundamental enemies, the poisons: greed, anger, and delusion.

(18) This is from steadfastness of mind  
Or else from cowardice.  
Thus disregard the injuries—  
Do not let pains affect you.

Referring to Verses Seventeen and Eighteen, Shantideva is reminding us of the need for a diligent, steadfast patience practice and not to let cowardice arise when injuries or pains, no matter how bloody, arise within our purview.

(19) Though pain occurs, the wise do not  
Disturb their joy of mind.  
When waging war against afflictions,  
Harm `s plentiful in battle.

Referring again to Verses Seventeen and Eighteen, *The Way* reminds us that the wise do not allow their minds to be overcome when faced with perceived difficulties and suffering, no matter how minor or gruesome. When waging war against our Self, there can be plenty of hurt, pain, and perceived harm.

(20) Triumphant heroes are they who  
Ignore all pain and quash  
Anger, hatred, and such—the enemy.  
Everyone else kills corpses.

No matter what occurs, be it an aversively perceived person, place, thing, event, or mindstate, the wise practitioner must lean into patience and end the pain and discomfort that has arisen. Succumbing to anger is no braver than stabbing someone who is already dead. In fact, even the physical killing of an enemy is partially to “kill a corpse” as the karma engendered by the anger thus expressed will harmfully grow, like a character in a bad zombie movie. We have better things to do, Shantideva is saying.

(21) Plus, suffering has benefits:  
Weariness dispels arrogance.  
Compassion arises for the samsaric.  
Shunning misdeeds, you delight in virtue.

Shantideva mentions three “benefits” of suffering: wearisomeness leads to modesty and humility; suffering, or dissatisfaction, leads to compassion; and avoiding wrong actions that leave us feeling aflame with suffering leads to virtuous right actions, right effort, right livelihood, and right speech. Carl is uncomfortable with this idea, this idea that suffering can ever be good for us. Especially when he thinks about Nagarjuna asserting that there is no suffering (suffering being empty, being just a perception, a mental construct). Andy feels Shantideva`s point more closely, suffering does exist conventionally, and pushes us toward “faith” as expressed by Vasubandhu – the faith that the path of Buddhist practice is effective to ameliorate suffering. On the other hand, with Carl, Andy has observed that suffering is not beneficial, for example, weakness also cause failure of self-control and angry eruptions.

(22) We don`t get angry at bile and such,  
Great sources of suffering.  
So why be angry at the sentient?  
Conditions provoke them too.

Today bile generally means a yellowish-green-brown bitter liquid secreted by the liver that aids in the process of the digestion of lipids. But in Shantideva`s time, when bodily functions were believed to be controlled by four humors (blood, phlegm, choler, and bile) it referred to a bitter-tempered, irascible person. Those character traits were believed to be caused by an excess of bile, which caused one`s disposition to be a nastiness that was a source of suffering. So we are being asked here, if it is a result of too much bile, something we cannot control, why get angry at those with too much bile. Like a stone that falls on our foot, occasioned by conditions (e.g., presence of stone and foot, existence of gravity, a tremble unsettling the platform holding the stone, etc.), irascible people, in Shantideva`s time and today, exhibit behavior likewise caused by conditions.

(23) Just as such illnesses occur  
Involuntarily,  
Afflictions are compelled to arise  
Involuntarily.

Most afflictions seem to arise obligatorily. Our affinities and aversions attach to our sense contacts seemingly without our input. But this is only as they appear. The affinities and aversions to each prior contact are stored in our karma, stored in our consciousness, based on imprints left from previous behaviors and narratives. We compare the current contact to these imprints(memories) and assign affinity or aversion concordant with these prior experiences. Nothing is involuntary! It may be pre-cognitive, but that doesn`t make it involuntary. Even with seemingly quick reactions of nastiness or unpleasantness, the behaviors ultimately all result from karma – from comparing the current sense inputs to those prior and behaving accordingly. We can change these reactions and this karma (at least going forward), but doing so requires planning and practice, for example by implementing a vow to change certain reactive behaviors, which vow is made in advance.

We need patience when our humors rouse illnesses in us, as Shantideva is saying here. Patience not anger.

(24) Though people don`t think, “I`ll get angry,”  
The commonplace angers them.  
Though they don`t think, “I shall arouse it,”  
Their fury still arises.

Like a humor gone awry, anger most frequently arises without us ever saying, “I`m going to get made at [fill in the blank]” Even under somewhat dire circumstances, like a leukemia diagnosis, we don`t get made at our blood – but we do sometimes anthropomorphize, silly us, and tell ourselves that we are under attack. That lead to believing we are The Victim. Silly us.

(25) All the offenses that there are,  
All manifold misdeeds,  
Occur because of their conditions—  
They have no self-control.

Following up on Verse Twenty-Four, “No!” Shantideva is declaring, even if we don’t think it, our bad behaviors and wrong views are not beyond our control. They are, rather, the result of conditions, and we have considerable control over conditions, both in content and in how we respond to them, once they reach our conscious minds.

(26) And the assembly of conditions  
Has no thought “I’ll produce,”  
Nor does what it produces have  
The thought “I’ll be produced.”

Shantideva is saying there is no reason to get angry at conditions, especially conditions that have no intentionality, like the jet stream or a hurricane, or a lightning strike. None of these were produced with the intent of harming us—no fallen tree arises with an idea of crushing the roof of our house. It arises from non-intentioned conditions with no goal in their production.

(27) The primal substance that they claim  
And Self that they imagine  
Do not think, “I will come to be,”  
And arise intentionally.

This is a key Mahayana insight – the Self, the “thing” that “gets angry” is itself the result of conditions, and, as with all arising things is ultimately the result of prior conditions that do not arise intentionally. The primal substance here is what today we call “emptiness.” Emptiness (and the Self imagined from an empty condition) cannot arise permanently and intentionally, so there is no reason for us to be aversive toward it and to develop anger at it. It makes no sense to get angry at the stone upon which we stub a toe, for it is a dumb thing incapable of malice or any other action, and selves, personalities, people, are ultimately made of the same dumb non-intentional emptiness, and so likewise are not worthy to cause anger.

(28) Without arising, they don’t exist—  
What then would want to arise?  
Always distracted by an object,  
I also would never cease.

Building on Verse Twenty-Seven, Shantideva is stating the obvious. If nothing can arise permanently and intentionally, then there is no anything, not even Self, that could arise as independent and autonomous. It follows that there is no self that “needs” or “is required” to be angered. , and therefore We would neither arise nor cease, neither be born more die, in a permanent way.

(29) If permanent, the Self, like space,  
Would clearly have no action  
When it encounters other conditions,  
What acts on the unchanging?

If the Self were permanent, Shantideva reminds us of the obvious, it would, by definition, have to be unchangeable. How could this thing with an identifiable nature, immutable characteristics that lend it its identity, remain the same when those characteristics were changed in reaction to changed conditions? If we can't change conditions that cause suffering, then there would be no reason for there to be a Buddhism! It would, incidentally, also call into question any purpose in life, without the possibility to change in reaction to conditions, the universe would simply be a machine running its unalterable course with all things predetermined, suffering would be inescapable, which we know not to be true in our Buddhist practices.

(30) If during the action, it's like before  
What does the action do to it?  
If you say, "This is what acts on it,"  
What is it that's related?

This is Shantideva saying emphatically following up on the above two verses, if things were permanent, it would be unable to act on them, and by inference, we could never eliminate suffering as we could not change conditions that make suffering arise.

(31) In this way, everything's dependent  
And thus has no control.  
When you know that, you won't get angry  
At any illusory thing.

Following on the last few verses, Shantideva is explaining that if everything is interdependent, nothing being permanent, then those external things are not acting out of agency, and so we should understand not to get angry since the object of our anger is simply imagined and so not real, illusory and delusional. In this way we can redirect our karma and create karmic conditions to cease adding reactive karma to our storehouses, making equanimity our default rather than additive reactive karma.

(32) "Who averts what? Even averting  
Would be illogical."  
It's logical to say suffering  
Will cease, dependent on that.

Anger and suffering, as Shantideva has explained, are not real, they are illusions, so too with Self, thus we must ask, who is here to get angry and suffering at the unreal? Shantideva has written a considerable number of verses about anger and Self. That's because we need to recognize them in order to practice patience. In other words, our patience practice arises from our recognition that to address anger in our Selves is a foolish waste of time. A diligent practice of patience is all we need to live lives directed toward liberation.

(33) Thus, when you see a friend or foe  
Acting improperly,  
Think happily that this occurred  
Because of such conditions.

So anger arises from conditions, and when someone is acting from wrong view or wrong intention, it is because of the arising of conditions, conditions that have a long karmic history, rather than having arisen solely from a current momentary action that might justify an angry response. The PTG translation illuminates this point more clearly, with this verse 33 reading:

“Thus, when enemies or friends  
Are seen to act improperly  
Remain serene and call to mind  
That everything arises from conditions.”

(34) If things were accomplished by free-will,  
No living being at all  
Would ever have any suffering,  
For no one wants to suffer.

One could take exception with this verse, there are people who get mileage out of suffering and causing conditions to arise that make others suffer, but in general, we need to use what free-will we think we have to minimize or eliminate our suffering rather than create it. When karmic conditions arise, when we become aware of the narratives that we use to navigate our everyday lives, meditation and a patience practice allow us to see that we can, in “the present moment,” inject changes from our free-will. No one has 100% free-will, but, at least with respect to our experiences of conventional reality, we do have considerable free-will once awareness arises and we see where we are headed. Ignorance plays in heavily as well – it is impossible to predict all the outcomes of our actions due to the limits of our understanding, but if we act from patience rather than anger, we stand a better chance of avoiding adding negative reactive karma to our storehouses than if we react from anger. This, in turn, helps to steer us toward ever-greater equanimity than perpetually reinforced negative reactivity.

(35) They injure themselves by being careless  
Of thorns, et cetera.  
From lust, they starve themselves and such  
For the sake of sex and the like.

Here is a shift in what Shantideva is explaining. When our patience practice weakens because of carelessness, sloppiness, or inattentiveness, then lust can dominate our minds and we will do almost anything, legal or illegal, even totally unwholesome for the sake of a sexual encounter. Similarly, we may consider and pursue other unhealthful “pleasures” that actually only serve to reinforce negative karma accumulation.

(36) Some hang themselves or jump from cliffs,  
Take poison or eat poorly.  
Or behave unmeritoriously,  
Causing themselves harm.

Reacting to perceived harm, rather than leading us to quietude, leads some of us to jump off bridges or overdose on a toxic dose of pharmaceutical or recreational drugs, committing suicide. Some, perceiving they have been harmed do other things, like creating torturous narratives about what is happening which in fact nothing is happening. We need to be diligent about disregarding perceived injustices and harmful narratives.

(37) When overcome by the afflictions  
They`ll kill their own dear Selves.  
At such a time, how would they not  
Cause harm to others` bodies?

Anyone who has experienced a suicide of someone close knows that, while the being involved dies, those close to them suffer from pain caused by the stress of the suicide. Again, this is following up on Shantideva`s previous assertion that we disregard those overcome by afflictions as a source of painful narratives for us. This doesn`t mean we lack compassion, just that we don`t allow sympathy for them to cause us the agony of loss. They are reacting to conditions in their suicidal act, we need not create further conditions for suffering in reaction to their acts.

(38) Though rarely do we feel compassion  
For those who kill themselves  
And so forth when afflictions arise.  
What good is getting angry?

As Carl explained from his experience with his father`s suicide, suicide is a solitary act that should elicit our compassion for the person suffering so that they would take their own lives. One elderly woman, when her husband died of “natural causes” because angry and furious at him for abandoning her. Her daughter said it took at least six years for her to get over the mourning and grieving, so it need not be suicide that we`re discussing her, it could be just dying.

(39) If causing harm to others is  
The nature of the childish,  
Anger at them is as senseless as  
Resenting fire for heat.

Again, Shantideva is telling us it makes no sense to get angry at the reactions of others to their current conditions. A patience practice would lead us to feel compassion and free us from months and even years of the Self`s omnipresent resentment.

(40) But if the fault is adventitious  
And beings` natures are gentle  
Anger at them would not be right,  
Like begrudging the sky for wafting smoke.

If beings` nature is gentle and mild, then there is no reason to be angry at them. Rather we should be patience, compassionate, and generous – seems easy, right? Being mad at them is like getting angry at the smoke in a smoke-filled sky from, say, a brutal, vast West Coast fire. Smoke

can waft across thousands of miles of sky, and still no need to become angry at it – conditions cause the smoke to arise and cease, as with all things.

(41) If I, ignoring the main thing—  
The stick—get angry at the wielder,  
Who is impelled by ire, it`s right  
To get incensed by hatred.

No, we don`t get angry at the stick. But if that is so, the Shantideva is saying that, just as the stick has no control over its striking us, then we must feel no anger at the wielder, who has not control over themselves, over the greed, and, and delusion that is controlling them.

(42) I, in the past, have caused such harms  
To other sentient beings,  
So it is right that these ills occur  
To me who have hurt beings.

This whole verse is based on the belief that if I committed harm to others in the past, then I deserve to have similar harms happen to me. Although a common belief in Shantideva`s time and culture, this *quid quo pro* belief makes no sense when examined closely, for several reasons: (1) it would require a metaphyseal force tracking our behavior and punishing us in another lifetime; (2) the whole idea of past and future lives makes no sense unless things are permanent, and Buddhism emphatically says nothing is permanent, especially since everything is impermanent and non-self; and (3) this can`t occur if the ultimate nature of phenomena is emptiness. There are other reasons, but you get the point. You might want to look at [deepdharma.org](http://deepdharma.org), under “beliefs and practices,” for discussions of these points, particularly under the “three dharma seals,” “emptiness,” and “reincarnation” sections of “beliefs and practices.”

(43) Their weapons and my body both  
Are causes of suffering.  
They wield the weapons, I the body.  
With whom should I get angry?

Since there are many interrelated causes for suffering, to blame just one thing, and get angry at it, makes no sense. Our tendency, however, because we reify people and things, is to assert blame—that`s our delusion, that`s our karma. For a more in depth understanding of karma, go to [deepdharma.org](http://deepdharma.org) and check out the karma essay under “beliefs and practices.”

(44) Blinded by craving, I have grasped  
This human body-like blister  
That, prone to pain, can`t bear being touched.  
Whom to get mad at when it`s hurt?

This is a complex way of saying that our grasping and clinging to our body, to this smelly waterbag, was the result of us believing our stories about what had or would happen to us. Note that we clung to our stories, not to the events that were occurring. “I like my new Subaru,” for

example, is not about clinging to our Subaru, but it is about clinging to our story about the worthiness of our new car. Note also that the body is noted as an unending source of suffering.

(45) The childish don't want suffering,  
But thirst for suffering's causes.  
Can I resent another being  
When harmed by my own wrongs?

We're so childish, Shantideva is saying. We say we don't want suffering and yet we thirst greedily for more, more, more deludedly. We not only thirst for it, we do everything we can to get it—a more luxurious car, a bigger house on a better plot of land, membership at the best country club, etc. In the end, this means we are harming ourselves with wrong actions especially keeping in mind that even when we “get what we want,” it causes suffering; we get imperfect versions of what we want, we want more, we want less, the things we get become stale, etc. If this is the case with the best outcome, getting what we want, how can we think it will be any more use to get angry with “externally” caused aversive things?

(46) If like the guardians of hell  
And like the sword-leaf forests,  
This is produced by my own actions,  
At whom should I get angry?

Those who seem to harm us, even guardians in hell, are giving us a chance to develop our patience practice. Similarly, those who leave us nervous or uncomfortable, who seem to be harming us though the harm is only in our mind, are giving us a chance to practice patience more deeply. In fact, all of these metaphors, the guardians of Hell, the sword-leaf forests and all the rest are actually our own narratives in action. All this suffering is our own creation.

(47) If those who, goaded by my karma,  
Appear and do me harm  
Should go to hell because of that,  
Have I not brought them to ruin?

Shantideva, believing in metaphysical retribution, says here that those who appear to be harm him will end up in hell. Is that not enough punishment? Why should I get angry at them? Carl thinks that today, we should interpret this less literally and more metaphorically, as a belief in the complex layers of Buddhist hells makes little sense, as does a belief in an occult force that follows and tracks our behavior to punish us sometime in the future. Andy's take is that this is a mini-lesson on the pervasive power of karma – our karma, if not mindfully managed, can impair compassion and patience, in turn impairing our helping ability directed to others.

(48) Because of them, I'll purify  
My many misdeeds through patience.  
Because of me, they'll go to hell's  
Long-lasting agonies.

So, when a being seems to harm me, it gives me the chance to improve my patience practice. Harm doesn't necessarily mean something as severe as stab you and rob you, it could and mostly does, mean that someone seems to be annoying by seemingly taking too long to unload their cart in the supermarket or is driving more slowly in front of you than you'd like to be going. It could be something relatively innocuous, or more severe. Regardless of the intensity of the event, it is a moment to engage in practicing patience. Those neglecting to return your phone call, or the gas station pump rejecting your credit card provide these practice opportunities. Reacting angrily can be a source of a sort of self-reinforcing karmic feedback loop – you generate karma through angry reactions, which may provoke further angry reactions from the “offenders,” further provoking you and so on.

(49) If I am causing harm to them  
While they are helping me,  
Why, O cruel mind, do you get angry  
Mistakenly at them.

If we are harming an adversary, it is because of a perceived harm they have caused us. I am harming them by engaging in the karmic-retributive cycle (i.e., they offend or otherwise harm me, I react angrily, they respond in kind or escalate, etc.) So why, Shantideva asks, would my cruel mind get angry at them? They will suffer in the hells of a future life, or, in the modern sense, in the remainder of the momentary events making up this life - isn't that enough?

(50) If I've the quality of intention  
I will not go to hell,  
And what can happen to them now  
If I protect myself?

If I have right intention, an intention to diligently engage in a patience practice, I will not suffer (go to a hell), and so in protecting myself from retribution, I am also protecting others, even if they seem to have done harm to me. What we all know is that when we are patient, we have a good shot that those around us will be patient too – we can disrupt the retributive cycle and its karmic accumulations.

(51) But if I harm them in return,  
They will not be protected  
While my conduct is debased;  
Austerity destroyed

If I lose patience and get angry, not only will I be debasing myself and opening myself up to future punishment, but I will have destroyed all the patience I have developed over the years (this could be seen as a reference to Verse One).

(52) Because the mind's not physical,  
No one can wound it at all.  
Because of fixation on the body  
The body is harmed by pain.

(53) Contemptuousness, abusive speech,  
 And words that are unpleasant  
 Inflict no harm upon the body.  
 Mind, why do they incense you?

(54) Displeasure others show for me  
 Will not devour me  
 In this or in another life.  
 So why do I dislike it?

As Shantideva has delineated how karma works in a series of verses with metaphoric content and poetic structure, it seems we might usefully understand what he is saying if we see it in a chart:

Wholesome acts of body, speech, and mind by me	Potentially leads to	More wholesome acts by me and wholesome acts by others
Unwholesome acts of body, speech, and mind by me	Potentially leads to	Unwholesome acts by others and more unwholesome acts by me
Unwholesome acts of body, speech, and mind by others	Potentially leads to	Wholesome acts by me and more unwholesome acts by me and others
Wholesome acts of body, speech, and mind by others	Potentially leads to	Wholesome acts by me and more wholesome acts by others

(55) Though I do not want that because  
 It blocks material gain  
 I`ll leave my things behind me here,  
 While wrongs will long remain

We need to express patience when others do things to us that prevent us from obtaining “material gain,” for the mind is not a material phenomenon and perceived wrongs (including material deprivation) will not last there. With a proper patience practice, the narratives we objectify are realized to only be thoughts in our minds, thoughts that will soon cease. Insults and criticisms should arouse patience, for they are just thoughts, thoughts that arise, abide, and cease for barely a moment. With such momentary existence, why create angst in our minds.

(56) It`s better I die now than live  
 Long with wrong livelihood.  
 Even if I were to live for long  
 The pain of death`s the same.

It's better to live a short life with right livelihood, than a long life with wrong livelihood, for the pain of wrong living and dying is the same as the pain of right living and dying. Death is the same for either, so Shantideva is suggesting we need to examine both, leading to an awareness of the value of a right livelihood. The way of the Bodhisattva, when it comes to right livelihood, is often misunderstood. Right livelihood, part of the eightfold path, is a livelihood which has the intention of being of benefit to those in need and acts for the well-being of those other sentient beings. A lawyer who devotes his career, for example, to developing a practice for low income housing law, would have right intention and thus would have right livelihood. On the other hand, a lawyer who devote his practice to monetary gain through, say, brutal combative divorces in which he keeps the couple battling so his fees will keep rising, would have wrong livelihood. So it is the intention, not the profession, that determine a right livelihood from a wrong livelihood. Another perspective on this verse's long life/short life dichotomy is to observe that a long life of evil will produce huge amounts of karma, and will thus reinforce suffering (and, in Shantideva's tradition, this suffering will even flow through further lifetimes.) Better to live more briefly and better, with less karmic accumulation.

(57) Someone feels bliss a hundred years  
In a dream and then wakes up.  
Another experiences bliss  
A moment and then wakes up.

Both moments of imaginary bliss, just moments that cease never to return.

(58) For either of the two who wake,  
That bliss will never return.  
A long life and a short life both  
Are finished when we die.

The bliss possible in a long life and the bliss felt for just a moment in a dream are the same, they both finish in us dying. So, Shantideva is saying, regardless of the length of the feeling, it is just a feeling that will cease as quickly as it has arisen. At a deeper level, the length of the blissful feeling and its "objective" reality are both narratives only, the products of karma. In this way, they are the same and are equally untethered to any ultimate reality.

(59) Though we acquire many things  
And enjoy them a long time,  
We will go as if robbed by bandits—  
Naked and empty-handed.

Acquiring things, especially "shiny things," things we greedily desire, some of which may feel desirable for a long time, they are still vulnerable to loss, theft, and destruction. Thus, we must practice with patience and mindfulness to become a bodhisattva and not attach to them as though they were desirable objects from their own side, as if they were phenomena we "should" feel an affinity for. Such affinity is nothing other than a story derived from our karma, and, like

all such stories, is self-reinforcing unless we break the karmic chain (or at least lessen its velocity) through our practices.

(60) If I live off my gains to abate  
My wrongs and practice virtue,  
Won't anger for the sake of goods  
Waste virtue and be a wrong?

Living off one's gains as a way of gaining virtuousness and merit to better oneself will result in anger, not satisfaction—too much emphasis on getting and not enough on practicing for this to be *The Way*. Thus Shantideva is asking, “Wouldn't this be wrong?” Indeed, yes. Especially since it will cause others to lose faith in us and the dharma.

(61) And if the purpose of my living  
Itself should be debased,  
What good's this life when all I do  
Is commit misdeeds?

Building on Verse Sixty-One, here Shantideva is affirming that our purpose in life should be to live right, perhaps as outlined in the eightfold noble path, or the paramitas, or the 9 calming mindstates and eleven virtuous mental qualities. Any other life than one based in patience, than one based in right actions, would be a waste. A life full of misdeeds being a waste is a common theme for Shantideva. We can even take it a step further – a life full of misdeeds results in manifold karmic accumulation, which can be seen as worse than a waste.

(62) Those who disparage you harm beings  
So you get angry, you say.  
Why don't you also get upset  
When are others disparaged?

Here is the question: being we get angry at those who disparage us, why don't we get upset when others are disparaged? We must live in a way that asserts that whether we are criticized, deride, ridiculed, or scorned, or whether someone else is, we don't get angry at the disparager. And we shouldn't, Shantideva suggests, get angry when derision arises, either at us or at others. Note that this guidance is at odds with common notions that one should get angry at derision toward yourself or others – at perceived injustice. One can act appropriately in reaction to injustice, but reaction out of anger rather than out of patience is what is inappropriate.

(63) If losing faith depends on others  
So you forgive the faithless,  
Afflictions depend on conditions,  
So why not forgive your critics?

If others lose faith in us as a bodhisattva, it is their faithlessness that causes them to suffer and to attack our beliefs. We need to be careful and diligent in these situations not to be angered by the afflictions of those attacking us, but rather to acknowledge suffering as the source of their pain

and their attacking us. Only then can we fully realize patience in the situation and harbor no ill toward them.

(64) It`s not right to get angry at those  
Who insult or destroy  
Statues, stupas, and the true dharma—  
The Buddhas and such aren`t harmed.

We are not harmed by others who might belittle or destroy the statuary and other symbols of Buddhism. Though it is wrong action it is not aimed at us, and so we should not get angry for the neither the Buddha nor Buddhism, our practice, is angry or harmed by such ravagings. The destruction of the great Buddhist statues of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2001, or the graffiti-ing of synagogues, these horrible deeds of others who are in pain, are example of when we should not get angry. Rather, these are times when the bodhisattva practices patience adamantly. Again, not getting angry doesn`t mean we do nothing is response to these crimes, but it does mean we enforce the laws against such behavior, for example, with patience and compassion. Again, this verse is reinforcing Shantideva`s belief that we should not get angry when others do something inappropriate, a theme that runs through this sixth chapter of *The Way*.

(65) As taught above, see those who harm  
Your master, kin, and friends  
As doing so from circumstances  
And thus, stave off your anger.

Building on Verse Sixty-Four, we need to stave off anger with patience and compassion, whether it is for those we love, those we like, or those who we are angry at for allegedly doing harm to us. Why should we be kind and patient with those who are aggressive toward us? Because we realize they have no control over their minds and are acting out of karmic dispositions founded in ignorance and delusion.

(66) If both the sentient and nonsentient  
Cause harm to living beings,  
Why single out and resent the sentient?  
Forbear their harms instead.

Again, using similar reasoning to Verse Sixty-Four, Shantideva is saying we should not have an aversion for “nonsentient” phenomena, such as natural disasters, wildfires, hurricanes, trees falling on our house, and the like. *Have patience*, these are not events directed at us. And we should not treat events that arise from the conditions of sentient beings the same as events that arise from the uncontrollable nonsentients – both arise from preceding conditions (and in the case of the sentient beings, their karma) that effectively determine their present actions. Anger will only add to the karmic load of the situation, whereas patience will help create conditions for better outcomes.

(67) Some, being ignorant, do wrong.  
Some, being ignorant, get angry

What would make either innocent?  
Which of the two is guilty?

Shantideva wants us to notice that both the aggressor and the innocent person at whom an attack is being made, anger has arisen in both from their ignorance and delusion. Neither is the guilty party; both are at fault.

(68) Why in the past did they do acts  
That would make others harm them?  
Since everything depends on karma,  
Why hold a grudge for the other?

Since everything depends on our karma, Shantideva is repeating the theme that we are not in control and so anger should not arise when we feel aversive (please read the karma posting at [deepdharma.org](https://www.deepdharma.org/beliefs-and-practices/karma/) under beliefs and practices: <https://www.deepdharma.org/beliefs-and-practices/karma/>). Again, since everything depends on karma, it may be considered the most important doctrine in all of Buddhism, thus reading up on it before moving any further forward in this commentary would be of great value.

(69) Realizing this, no matter what,  
I will endeavor at merits  
So everyone will come to have  
Mutually loving thoughts.

This is similar in theme to the metta instruction in Verse Eleven and seen in the chart in the commentary of Verse Fifty-Four. Shantideva is saying here that the more I develop and practice patience, the more compassion and lovingkindness will arise in me and everyone else.

(70) When fire that has burned one house  
Spreads to another home  
You gather up and throw away  
The straw and such that fuel it.

This is a simple metaphor reminding us to put out the flaming straw before it expands and burns down many more houses. We do this with Right Effort. Right Effort reminds us to abandon our anger and refrain from developing more causes for unwholesome actions to arise. Then it tells us to *develop* the causes of a patience practice and a compassionate, lovingly kind life, and to *maintain* them regardless of the circumstances.

Carl is reminded that, without a patience practice, we often will find our minds creating a story that the house has burned down before it is on fire, and soon enough the story expands and all our neighboring houses are aflame. Shantideva's language is active (" . . . gather up and throw away"), but the actual practice of patience is protective – not exactly passive, but acting as a shield. By not allowing the fuel for the fire of karma, anger, to accumulate or arise at all, patience forestalls karma accumulation. This is how we stop the fire from spreading.

(71) Likewise throw away instantly  
Whatever you`re attached to  
That fuels the fires of anger and hatred, fearing  
They will consume your merit.

Use diligence and mindfulness to instantly notice our attachment to causes of anger, real or imaginary. If we don`t, it will destroy all our meritorious efforts in the past, as it says in Verse One.

(72) What`s wrong, if someone condemned to death,  
Their hand cut off, if freed?  
What`s wrong with human suffering  
Removing you from the hells?

This analogy describes a prisoner having his hand amputated rather than being beheaded. It is reminding us again of the great value of patience, of trading small pains rather than greater (amputation rather than beheading). And while the image may have been more readily understandable in Shantideva`s time, we are still using amputation as a punishment for breaking the law in several countries, like Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, the Sudan, and most recent to join those is Afghanistan under the Taliban. "Patience, not anger," Shantideva is admonishing us.

(73) If I cannot bear this amount  
Of suffering in the present,  
Why then do I not stop my anger,  
Cause of hell`s agonies?

Again, in Shantideva`s time, beheadings and amputations were common punishments, and the mitigating conditions (amputation in lieu of death) were severe, but not as severe as the primary punishments. The purpose of patience as a character trait is to bring anger to a screeching halt, a practice that is very difficult, so we avoid those more ultimate punishments (hell).

(74) For sake of desire, a thousand times  
I have experienced  
Being burned and such in hell but done  
No good for myself or others

When we are aflame with anger, we do no good for ourselves or others. Again we return to this fundamental theme explaining that anger is of no value and instead is detrimental. Nevertheless, the human condition is to afflict ourselves with the fiery torment of anger, and often. Patience is a practice toward improving this condition, lessening suffering. Note also that Shantideva has made a shift in this verse specifically to discussing the pain caused by desire, which is pervasive. We are virtually always in various states of disappointment (not getting what we want or not enough of it, etc.)

(75) But this is not the great harm,  
And a great aim will be accomplished.

It`s right to only be delighted  
At pains that dispel harm to beings.

When we encounter people, places, things, mindstates, etc., that cause anger to arise, we should only see them as positive events if they lead us to dispel the anger and become more patient. Getting stuck in traffic would be a simple example of this; learning that you have a cancerous tumor could, when properly perceived, be another bigger and more difficult example, but an example nonetheless.

(76) If others are pleased when they praise someone  
As having qualities\*,  
Why then, O mind, do you not as well  
Praise them and take delight?

\*Qualities means wholesome, meritorious qualities. These are stored in our alaya consciousness and form the base for our creating narratives that lead us to act admirably and beneficially for the sake of others` well-being.

Shantideva reminds us that praising others for their virtue and merit leads to their peace (those doing the praising) and happiness while at the same time, if we don`t rejoice in their happiness, we will suffer.

(77) Your pleasure from rejoicing is  
A blameless source of delight  
Allowing by those with qualities—  
The best way to gather others.

Again we are being told (by Shantideva and other sages, “those with qualities”) that sympathetic joy, rejoicing in others` good fortune, is a virtuous way for us to feel a rightly lived life and happiness.

(78) “But others will be happy too.”  
If you don`t want this joy,  
You`ve stopped paying wages and will thus  
Destroy the seen and unseen.

If we don`t want the happiness that arises from sympathetic joy (Verse Seventy-Seven), we will suffer. It is like not paying our employees resulting in the employees retaliating against us leaving us suffering. Alternatively, Shantideva can be read here as advising simply against keeping account of joy given and returned – this is not some sort of transactional relationship that will yield anything good for any sufferer. This seems clear from the PTG translation of this verse 78:

“But they`re the ones who`ll have the happiness,” you say.  
If this then is a joy you would resent,  
Abandon paying wages and returning favors,  
You will be the loser – both in this life and the next!

(79) When yours are the qualities described

You want that others be pleased.  
When others` qualities are described,  
You don`t want to be pleased yourself.

This verse is a restatement of those prior: Shantideva wants us to be careful about our tendency is to be pleased with ourselves when we do good and Right things, but when others` wholesome behaviors arise, we often feel envy and anger.

(80) If you aroused bodhicitta\* because  
You want all beings to be happy,  
When beings find themselves happiness,  
Why does that make you angry?

\* The mind of a practitioner that strives toward liberation, guided by empathy and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is the mind of a bodhisattva.

Notice that our aim might be to want all beings to be happy, but when we see those whom we dislike happy, instead of rejoicing we become angry. All beings, Shantideva is asserting, includes those whom we dislike.

(81) If you want for beings the Buddhahood  
Adored in the three worlds\*  
Why does it gall you so to see  
Them have paltry honor.

\* Buddhist cosmology adopts an ancient Aryan conception of the world having three strata or layers (earth, atmosphere, and sky) and renames these as the Desire Realm, the Form Realm, and the Formless Realm.

If we really want all beings to reach Buddhahood, then why are we upset when they have some paltry, honorable character trait? . In other words, we should have sympathetic joy at seeing others achieve distinction, no matter how small it might be,

(82) If a relative whom you support—  
Someone to whom you give—  
Should gain a livelihood, would you  
Be angry instead of pleased?

(83) If you don`t want, even for that being,  
How can you wish them enlightenment?  
If you are irked by others wealth,  
How can you have bodhicitta?

If a relative who was down on his luck gets a job, would you be angry instead of pleased, would you feel slighted because you are unable to continue gaining merit from supporting them? Of course we should be pleased at their good fortune, though that is not always what arises at our perceived loss.

If we truly want enlightenment for that relative, then it makes no sense to be upset by their improved material status. If that were so, we could never achieve bodhicitta, so we must, Shantideva is reminding us, always be diligent and wholesome in our relationships.

(84) If they get something or it remains  
Inside the patron`s house,  
In either case, it is not yours.  
Given or not, why care?

Further to Verses Eighty-Three and Eighty-Four, when an adversary gets a gift, we should not be envious. The gift is not ours, so why get angry at the belongings of another, regardless of their previous economic status. The fact that we helped someone in need does not give us the right to be angry when they are finally successful on their own and no longer need our support.

(85) Why do you throw away your merits,  
Your faith and qualities?  
Tell why you`re not angry at the one  
Who doesn`t hold on to their gains.

When others gain meritorious qualities, our yoke, our burden to save them lightens, so we should feel peace and joy, not angst. This is also reminiscent of Economics 101 – relieving suffering is not just about gaining merit, it also involves conservation of previous merit in the “equation.”

(86) Do you not only feel no sorrow  
For the wrongs you`ve done yourself  
But also want to vie against  
Those who have performed merit?

(87) Even when enemies are displeased,  
What`s there for you to enjoy?  
The wishes in your mind along  
Won`t cause them any harm.

Being unhappy when our enemies are suffering, wishing them unhappiness, is pointless and childish, Shantideva is saying. Why? Because our wishing them harm will not cause them harm but will lead us instead to suffering. Recall that all outcomes are preceded by conditions, arise from conditions. In addition to causing our own suffering, our desires for harm to others fail even on their own terms – they do not even create the conditions for this desired harm to others to occur.

(88) How would it please you to accomplish  
The pain you wish for them?  
You say you would be satisfied—  
What greater ruin than that?

Wishing pain and suffering for others, in particularly those whom we dislike, you believe will make you happy. In fact, quite the opposite is the case, it only causes us to be unsatisfied and leaves ruinous karmic imprints in our consciousness.

(89) Unbearably sharp, the hook cast by  
The fisherman, afflictions.  
Caught on it, surely I`ll be cooked  
In cauldrons by hell`s keepers

Our desires for or not to have are major afflictions. They prevent us from being patient. When they get caught on a fisherman`s sharp, barbed hook we end up being cooked in a hell of our own making.

(90) Praise, fame, and honor will not beget  
Merit or long life.  
They will not bring me strength, good health,  
Or physical well-being

Seeking status is not the path to liberation. The path is diligent, mindful patience and meditation. Movie stars and politicians do not out-live us because they are famous.

(91) If I know what is good for me,  
What`s good for me in those?  
If all you want is mental pleasure,  
Use drink and dice and such.

If temporary pleasure is all we want, then don`t go after praise and fame. Drugs will be much better and work much faster. But what we should be seeking, in place of momentary pleasures, is a life of ease and patience.

(92) For sake of fame, some squander wealth  
Or even get themselves killed.  
What use are words? When you are dead,  
Who will they make happy?

What use are words? What use is wealth? In the immortal words of the murdered rap artist The Notorious B.I.G., "Mo` money, mo problems." All that matters is how peacefully and patiently we move from one moment to another.

(93) When their sandcastles are destroyed,  
Children wail in distress.  
Likewise when I lose praise and fame,  
My mind is like a child`s.

When our sandcastle comes crumbling down, we cry in distress at the loss of the ever short-lived traits of fame and acclaim. Kids and adults.

(94) Words have no mind; for them to wish  
To praise me is impossible.  
Though hearing that another likes me  
May be a cause of pleasure.

Shantideva directs our attention to the mechanistic nature of all things that stimulate reaction in us, including words. They are mere sound waves that require processing through physical and chemical means. There is no intention in them to make me feel good. It is the intention of the people speaking that leads to us being mistakenly happy and, at base, these intentions themselves are simple mechanisms, arising from conditions. A happy life comes from being patient and compassionate and generous, from being equanimous, not from reading too much into these multifarious stimuli arising from conditions over which we have little influence!

(95) What good does someone else`s fondness  
For me or another do me?  
That like and pleasure is their own;  
I won`t get even a bit.

Being praised may not seem to be advantageous, but a deeper look at it shows that it does have one advantage, it can lead us new level of modesty and humility, which in turn deepen our patience practice and allow compassion to arise.

(96) If their being happy makes me pleased,  
I should be so for all.  
Why aren`t I pleased when they`re made happy  
By their love for another?

If being happy happens when we are praised, then shouldn`t I be happy as well when my enemies are praised. We should, Shantideva is suggesting, feel the same about everyone whether they are friend or foe.

(97) Therefore my pleasure that arises  
When I am being praised  
Is irrational and nothing more  
Than just a child`s behavior.

We like being praised, but that as a source of peaceful and happiness is irrational. Words are empty and lacking intention, praise and it associated emotions are fleeting, changeable, impermanent.

(98) Praise and so forth bring distraction,  
Destroy world weariness,  
Cause envy of those with qualities,  
And ruin prosperity.

Praise is usually a distraction; it leads to pride and arrogance, and it make the realization of No Self difficult. It is a cause for envy in the accomplishments of others, and a cause of negative thoughts and actions. “Ruinous envy,” is the result of praise. It ruins all the diligent efforts we have exerted to build our patience and compassion, replacing them with anger and delusion.

(99) So haven` t those who lurk nearby  
To wreck my acclaim and such  
Come to protect me against falling  
Into the lower realms.\*

People who skulk nearby with the aim of disrupting our meditation, for example, can show me the path of patience that protects me from falling into the lower realms. Alternatively, we should appreciate those who would tear us down, they are helping us to avoid puffery and remind us to focus on patience.

\* The three lower realms are the realms of animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. (The three upper realms are gods, titans, and humans.)

(100) What need have I, who seek liberation,  
Of the fetters, gain and respect?  
And why should I get angry at those  
Who release me when I am bound?

As bodhisattvas our goal is liberation, we should not get angry at our foes, but rather use their greed and anger and delusions, use their wrong view and actions as a way of furthering our practice of patience, compassion, and generosity.

(101) When I want to rush into suffering,  
How is it I get angry  
At those who, as if blessed by the Buddha,  
Don` t let me, blocking the way?

If we want to seriously deepen our patience practice, we must avoid becoming angry at those we perceive as blocking our practice. Those beings are, in fact, a blessing.

(102) It makes no sense to get angry at those  
Who I think thwart my merit.  
If there`s no austerity like patience,  
Should I not dwell in that?

Being that patience is the ideal character trait, I must work diligently to stay always patient, even when faced with those mentioned in Verse One Hundred One.

(103) If I cannot be patient with them  
Because of my own faults,  
Then all I`ve done is block the cause  
Of merit that was at hand

We need to overcome our own limitations and faults when stressed, particularly by others we deem an irritant, like those in Verses One Hundred One and Two, if we are to develop our patience in the fullest way. Shantideva is further accentuating that annoyance and other forms of anger are sourced from our own karma and psyches, not “caused” by others.

(104) If the cause of something is that which  
If absent, it won't be,  
And with which, it will come to be  
How is that called an obstruction?

In fact, those Shantideva has been discussing in the last three verses aren't really the cause of an obstruction to our practice there are in fact facilitators. We cannot develop patience without some irritating people to show us the way. Just imagine being a person who laughs and take joy and appreciation when being confronted with enemies and obstructions – that is a picture of a powerful being indeed!

(105) A beggar appearing at the right time  
Does not prevent your giving  
It is not right to say your abbot  
Stopped you from going forth.

Shantideva is speaking metaphorically here, saying that neither a beggar begging nor an Abbot criticizing us can hold us back, but rather they act as lamps to light our way to liberation. Only through active patience practice can we alter our karma and get closer to true equanimity, and we can only pursue this active practice by taking advantage of obstructions and annoyances.

(106) Though there are beggars in this world,  
Those who cause harm are rare,  
For if you do no harm to others,  
No one will harm you back.

Remember, Shantideva is saying, it is very unlikely that either the beggar or the Abbot will harm us unless we do them harm first or, alternatively, the harm done by them to others is usually not significant. Let's not blame others for starting a fight, like children do, when we started the ruckus through a misunderstanding of their intentions.

---

Verses One Hundred Seven through One Hundred Ten repeatedly use the term “enemy.” While in Shantideva's time, enemies were common with warring kingdoms existing throughout in the Indian subcontinent, today it would be better to understand the term not as “enemy” in the sense of an assailant, but as an annoying neighbor or frustrating colleague at work.

---

(107) Therefore just like a trove appearing

Painlessly in a home,  
I will delight in enemies,  
My friends in enlightened conduct.

Patience leads us to respecting our enemies, for they are our dharma brothers and sisters on the path to enlightenment. Our foes, are, according to Shantideva to be understood as blessed partners on our path to patience and liberation. It seems that Shantideva must understand how hard to accept this point may be – he has devoted many verses to this theme, encouraging us to engage with the idea through repetition.

(108) Since they and I created it  
It`s right to give the fruits  
Of patience to my enemies first,  
For they`re the cause of patience.

As we learned to deepen our patience practice from the conditions our enemies created, we should show them patience first, and thankfully.

(109) If enemies deserve no honor  
Since they`ve no thought to make you patient,  
Why would you honor the true dharma,  
The cause of accomplishment?

Enemies do not have to have an intention of benefiting us for us to learn from the dharma to honor them because they are the cause of our patience practice developing. This makes them the ideal dharma teachers for patience – if they acted obstructively with a beneficial intent to help teach patience, the teaching would be weakened. Without them, without trying times, our patience would become stagnant.

(110) Though you won`t honor your enemies  
Because they want to harm you,  
If they, like doctors, wished to help,  
How could they make you patient?

Again, Shantideva is saying that there is no way to develop a patience practice without some frustrating people (enemies) to test the strength of our practice. Even someone mistakenly or unnecessarily blowing their car horn at us can test our patience. But if everyone, like doctors, was acting beneficially, intentional acting to help us grow and develop in the dharma, then how could patience increase? Indeed, without malintended others, there would be far fewer opportunities to defeat karma accumulation.

(111) Thus since malevolent intent  
Is what produces patience,  
Just they are the cause of patience and worthy  
Of veneration, like true dharma.

Malicious, spiteful, vindictive intentions are what gives us a chance to develop and polish our patience practice, so they are worthy of respect. It works like this, when we are confronted with malevolence, we take note of it and remind ourselves that the appropriate response is patience, not anger. In this way, “enemies” are beneficial to us, even though it might not seem so at first glance.

(112) There are fields of sentient beings  
And victors, said the Sage.  
Many who have respected them  
Have gone beyond to perfection.

Here Shantideva is noting that all sentient beings are as worthy of respect as a Buddha. He also notes that some of those beings have gone on to liberation, another reason to respect them for their practice and coming enlightenment.

(113) A Buddha`s qualities are gained  
From beings and Buddhas alike.  
How is it right to have respect  
For victors but not beings?

We need, Shantideva is explaining, to realize that our wholesomeness is gained from enlightened ones as well as sentient being whom we like or dislike and whom are not enlightened.

(114) It`s not from qualities of intention  
But due to the results  
That beings have qualities like theirs  
And therefore, are their equals.

All beings are equals when it comes to us learning the path to liberation from them—all equals, ordinary being and Buddhas. The PTG translation goes a step further, saying that all beings are in fact Buddhas:

Not in the qualities of their minds  
But in the fruits they give are they alike.  
In beings, too, such excellence reside,  
And there fore beings and Buddhas are the same.

(115) Offering to those with lovingkindness  
Is sentient beings` greatness  
The merit of having faith in the Buddhas  
Is the Buddhas` greatness.

What makes all sentient beings eminent, Shantideva is saying, is compassion and lovingkindness and their leading us along those meritorious pathways. What makes Buddhas great is their faith in Buddhahood as the path to liberation for all beings, them included.

(116) For gaining a Buddha`s traits, they have  
A part and are thus equal.  
Infinite oceans of qualities,  
The Buddhas are equaled by no one.

While, of course, sentient beings are not equal in qualities to Buddhas, they are equal in another way. Shantideva is telling us that their potential to assist us in accumulating the meritorious character traits needed to become liberated equates then with Buddhas. Indeed, this recalls the Mahayana observation that all things are connected and interdependent – even Buddhas are connected to and preceded by our dharma brothers and sisters. Verses One Hundred Sixteen through One Hundred Twenty-Two pound home this theme.

(117) Offering even the three realms  
To those who appear to have  
A tiny share of the qualities  
Of those who are the unique  
Collection of sublime qualities  
Would be inadequate.

Even in the lower realms, where beings who might have at least some of the sublime qualities, even the worst of the worst have helped Buddha achieve wisdom and so deserve respect.

(118) Since beings have a part in the birth  
Of a Buddha`s supreme traits,  
They are similar to that extent  
And thus deserve veneration.

Again, pushing the theme of equality yet again, Shantideva is making sure we understand we all have a role, either through wholesome or unwholesome acts, in the creation of a Buddha. No one becomes a Buddha alone.

(119) Other than pleasing sentient beings,  
What way is there to repay  
Those stalwart friends who act to bring  
Immeasurable benefit?

Loyal friends (nd Buddhas!) are repaid when we act to respect their wishes and aid them in their needs. Again and again, Shantideva returns to the theme of all of us having a part in someone`s liberation, either through wholesome or unwholesome deeds, and through our responses to them.

(120) Since helping them repay those who forsake  
Their bodies and go to the Incessant Hell\*,  
Even when they inflict on you great harm,  
Make all your actions solely excellent.

\* The worst level of the "hell" realms, a "hot" hell realm of unending torture with the most suffering of any of the hells in the Buddhist cosmology

Even those who forsake wholesomeness in their action need to be repaid by us for helping us to reach liberation. Again, no matter how harmful their actions, we need to show them respect.

(121) Meanwhile, how is it I—an ignoramus—  
Am prideful and don't act like a true servant  
To those for whose sake they who are my lords  
Have disregarded even their own bodies?

This is repeating Verse One Hundred Twenty, noting that we, lacking pride, need to be a humble servant to all beings, for it is only as their servant can we reach liberation.

(122) Making them happy, whose happiness delights  
And injuries distress the lords of sages,  
Brings all the lords of sages gratification,  
While harming them brings injury to the sages.

The result of a deep patience practice is that we bring joy and ease to all beings, even those who cause harm to all beings, even Buddhas.

(123) Just as no object of desire will bring  
Happiness when your body is on fire,  
If you harm sentient beings, there is no way  
That those with great compassion could be pleased.

If our minds are on fire with stories of raging unwholesomeness, we are stuck in a metaphysical hell, with no way for compassion to arise and lift us to attain liberation.

(124) Therefore I now confess all my misdeeds  
Which, as they have caused harm to sentient beings,  
Distress all those endowed with great compassion.  
May all those whom I have displeased forgive me.

Here Shantideva admonishes himself for all his unwholesome actions of body, speech, and mind, and asks, asking for forgiveness. Indeed, we should all be diligent in our practice of patience, noting misdeeds and correcting our karmic imprints so those misdeeds do not occur again.

(125) To please the tathagatas (buddhas), from today onward  
I shall be the world's slave. I won't strike back.  
No matter how many people stomp my crown  
Or kill me. Guardians of the world, be happy!

The world would be such a more peaceful place if we all made this vow along with Shantideva: No matter what sentient beings do to harm me, I vow not to strike back. Patience utterly replacing anger, that's the vow.

(126) There `s no doubt they whose nature is compassion  
Regard all of these beings as themselves  
Those who are seen as sentient beings in nature  
Are guardians in essence—why disrespect them?

As explained in the verse above, we can make ourselves into guardians of all being with a patience practice that releases our compassion, a compassion that does not do harm to others, regardless of their behaviors. Setting and example, a Buddha is so compassionate, her practice is so advanced, that she “regards all beings as themselves.” Indeed, ultimately, without the invented story of the self, there is no distinction to be made between ourselves and others.

(127) Just this is what will please the tathagatas.  
Just this is what fulfills my own aims.  
Just this dispels the suffering of the world,  
And therefore I will always do just this.

Guardianship of all, “just this” is what Shantideva says will end of the suffering of the world and please all Buddhas. “Just this” is who we all should strive to be, for ourselves and for all others, Buddhas and beings alike. This is a subtle theme that is strewn throughout this sixth chapter on patience, for patience is what allows us to be “just this,” to be compassionate to all.

(128) Just as, when one of the king `s men  
Wreaks havoc on many people,  
Even if able, the farsighted  
Do not retaliate

“Just this” means that even when a king `s army pillages our home and assault, even kills, those we love and care about, even then we stay farsighted enough to realize not to retaliate, for we want to stay, long-term as well as short term, on the path of patience. Note that this injunction not to retaliate does not mean that we are not to defend ourselves and others if conditions exist where we can take action to prevent their harm. Rather, once harm is done, doing yet more harm is only gratuitous, creating karma within ourselves to no benefit.

(129) For he is not alone—his forces  
Are the forces of the king—  
Likewise do not look down upon  
Weak people who cause harm,

Respect all, even the weak, for they are the source that allows us to develop into compassionate beings and Buddhas. The weak who harm us are subject to preceding conditions, including control of them by others.

(130) For theirs are the forces of hell `s keepers

And of the compassionate.  
Just as his subjects propitiate  
A tyrant, respect beings.

The weak are hell`s keepers, even so, compassion, which arises from patience, is our course of action according to Shantideva. This course of action is the path that soothes even the worst of tyrants—hell`s gatekeepers as well as their opposites, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. And again, we read here the theme of treating all beings equanimously, treating all beings with patience and compassion

(131) Even if angered, could a king  
Inflict what is experienced  
Because of making beings despair—  
The agonies of hell?

Lacking patience and respect, acting unwholesomely, leads us to anger and, even if we were a king, this anger and despair leads us to the agonies of hell. Additionally, the torment of self-caused anger is hell itself. We can lessen and even prevent this experience of hell only through practicing patience.

(132) Even if pleased, a king could not  
Provide what is achieved  
By making sentient beings happy—  
Buddhahood itself.

No matter what our rank, even that of a king, Buddhahood is only accomplishable with a patience practice aimed at saving all sentient beings.

(133) Leave future Buddhahood aside,  
Do you not see in this life  
That pleasing sentient beings brings  
Much glory, fame, and joy?

When we are patience, we see that patience and compassion are the values that bring us to the joy and ease of liberation.

(134) While in samsara, patience brings  
Beauty and so forth,  
Good health, prestige, a very long life  
And a Chakravarty`s\* pleasures.

\*In Buddhism, a chakravarti is the secular equivalent of a Buddha, meaning a king or ideal universal ruler, particularly of the entire Indian subcontinent.

Anger is the emotion that deters us along the path, but it is clear that patience is what bring us to a liberated life of peace and joy. Patience and compassion are traits available to any living being.

*Opening line of chapter seven, bringing Chapter Six to a close:*

**Thus with patience, be diligent.**