

Shantideva's Bodhisattvacharyavatara

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤྱོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བཞུགས་སོ་

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Let us do our regular meditation practice.

[meditation]

Now we can generate the motivation for receiving the teachings:

For the sake of all mother sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will listen to the Mahayana teachings and put them into practice well.

3.2.1.1. ESTABLISHING THE MAIN METHOD NEEDED FOR BECOMING ENLIGHTENED

3.2.1.1.2. Achieving that very action

3.2.1.1.2.3. Abandoning harm

3.2.1.1.2.3.2. *If one harms them, there is no way to please the buddhas*

The following explanations are quite easy to understand. The verse relating to this heading is:

123. *Just as one will never be mentally happy despite all sense objects
When the whole body is completely in flames,
Similarly there is no way to please the greatly compassionate ones
When one harms sentient beings.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads

For that reason, just as one will never be mentally happy despite all sense objects such as food and so forth, if one's body is completely in flames, there is no way to please the greatly compassionate ones if one harms sentient beings.

The analogy here is that if *one's body is consumed in flames* then not even *objects of the sense pleasures such as delicious food, beautiful sights and so forth*, will bring mental happiness. The agony is so great that one cannot experience any joy from the sense pleasures. Similarly, *there is no way to please the greatly compassionate ones if one harms sentient beings*. The point of this example is if one were to harm sentient beings then, even if one were to present extensive offerings to the enlightened beings, it will not please them.

We need to understand how *great compassionate ones'* love and concern for sentient beings exceeds a mother's love for an only child. The love of a mother for her only child is a contemporary example that illustrates the extent of the love and compassion that a sentient being can have for another being. The buddhas' love and compassion for each and every living sentient being far exceeds that. It is hard to measure the love and compassion the buddhas have for all living beings. Thus, when one harms any living being, then that definitely displeases the buddhas. What we need to understand from this explanation, and put into personal practice, is to make every effort to avoid harming any living being.

No amount of offerings or practice can please the buddhas if one is harming sentient beings, as that is completely contrary to their wishes. So refraining from harming sentient beings is one of the optimum offerings to the enlightened beings. The real meaning of the Sanskrit word *punja*, which we pronounce as *puja*, has the connotation of pleasing the mind. Therefore since whatever pleases the mind of the enlightened beings is the real offering, avoiding harm towards any living being is the optimum offering.

It is good to understand the real connotation of *offering* as a way to incorporate it into our practice. With the proper understanding we can then adopt this resolution: 'To the utmost of my ability I will refrain from harming sentient beings, as this is the optimum means to gain genuine peace and happiness, as well as the supreme offering to the enlightened beings'. Of course, as mentioned earlier, it only becomes a real offering when we incorporate this understanding into our daily life and put it into practice. Nice offerings laid on the altar don't really amount to much if we neglect this essential practice.

One needs to understand that the practice of non-harmfulness is an actual antidote to harmful intentions. That is what practising non-harmfulness means. If one resolves to practise non-harmfulness, then one is applying the antidote to harmful intention. This is how the practice actually works—when it is applied as an antidote to overcome negative states of mind.

If we fail to understand this, then even though we might be able to extensively explain a topic, we will not know how to put it into practice.

3.2.1.2. TO CONFESS THE DISRESPECTFUL THINGS ONE DID EARLIER

This, of course, relates to the need to confess the negativities that one has committed, and then purify them. These negativities will have been driven by the influence of the three poisons, namely anger, attachment and ignorance. The way to please the minds of the buddhas is by accumulating virtue, and any negative actions will be a source of displeasure for them.

So one confesses all these negative actions. This involves developing strong regret for having committed those negativities, clearly recognising them as being such; understanding that it has been a great fault; feeling a strong sense of remorse; and resolving not to commit them again.

A point to keep in mind is that one will resolve to the extent of one's regret. This is where you need to refer back to the second chapter on confession, which explains how to engage in the confession practice. Otherwise, one might wonder what the practice entails.

The verse relating to this heading reads:

124. *Hence, whatever harm to migrators
That caused displeasure to the greatly
compassionate ones,
That negativity I confess today individually
And request the conquerors to be patient with
anything causing displeasure.*

Gyaltsab Je's explanation reads:

Since harming sentient beings causes displeasure to the buddhas, I will confess the negativities that

brought displeasure to the greatly compassionate ones, because of my previous harm to migrators. From today I will confess them individually, and not conceal them, and I request them to be patient with any harm to sentient beings that causes displeasure.

With the words, *since harming sentient beings causes displeasure to the buddhas I will confess the negativities that brought displeasure*, one recalls all the negativities one has engaged in previously, particularly those numerous ways where, under the influence of strong anger, attachment, or jealousy and so forth, one has harmed sentient beings. When one's mind is afflicted by strong negativities, then one engages in such negative actions as taking the life of other sentient beings, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, engaging in slanderous, or divisive and harmful speech, and so forth. These negativities, along with covetousness, deluded doubt, and wrong view, are called the ten non-virtues.

As further explained, *these negativities brought displeasure to the great compassionate ones because of my previous harm to migrators*. Here it is specifically stating that these actions displease the great compassionate ones, i.e. enlightened beings, as well as the noble beings. So one is confessing all of the negativities that displease the minds of these holy beings.

Having identified the negativities one has engaged in previously, and with clear recognition of those negativities, one confesses them as follows, *from this day on I will confess them individually and not conceal them*. This refers to recalling all the negativities one has previously engaged in. Confessing them individually refers to confessing and purifying the negativities accumulated by engaging in physical actions, through speech, as well as negative thoughts. Thus one confesses and purifies the negativities created through one's body, speech and mind.

Not concealing them means that having acknowledged them, one proclaims those negativities verbally. One does this as a way of not concealing them. This is followed by requesting the compassionate ones *to be patient with any harm to sentient beings that cause displeasure to the minds of the buddhas*.

In summary, one identifies the negative actions that have harmed sentient beings which have caused displeasure to the buddhas' minds; one acknowledges one has committed them; one confesses them individually; one does not conceal them; and finally one requests the buddhas to be patient with the negativities that one has created.

3.2.1.3. RESTRAINING FROM FUTURE DISRESPECTFUL ACTIONS

Following the confession one makes a pledge or resolution to refrain from future negative actions.

The verse relating to this heading is:

125. *In order to make the tathagatas happy
From today I will be absolutely subdued and
the world's servant
Though many beings pound my head by kicking it
Or even kill me, I won't retaliate but please the
protectors of the world. Gyaltsab Je explains
this verse as follows:*

In order to make the tathagatas happy, from today I will be absolutely subdued and harm nobody and become and accept myself as the servant of the world. Subdue here refers to accepting oneself as servant of the world with firmness in one's mind. Though many beings pound my head by kicking it or even kill me, I shall not retaliate but bear it and in such a way act to please the minds of the protectors of the world.

As explained here one makes the pledge: *In order to make the tathagatas happy, from today I will be absolutely subdued and harm nobody*. Here, *subdued* refers to subduing one's mind from harmful intention, and we can also relate it to delusions such as pride. *And then become and accept myself as a servant of the world* indicates that one will place oneself in a lowly position, where one shows great respect for all sentient beings, refrains from harming them, subdues harmful intentions and delusions such as pride, and pays respect to all sentient beings. This is what one resolves to do.

One should not misinterpret 'holding others as being supreme' as meaning that one should regard oneself as insignificant. That is not what it means. Rather, having respect for other sentient beings relates to remembering their kindness. As explained in the teachings, particularly in the *Abhidharma*, when one remembers the kindness of others one generates respect for them, and when one remembers the qualities of others one generates faith in them.

In relation to one's parents, for example, we develop a sense of respect when we remember their kindness. One wouldn't necessarily call that faith, but one will definitely have respect for one's parents, which comes from thinking about the kindness that they have shown. Whereas, by remembering the qualities and kindness of one's spiritual teachers, one can generate both respect and faith in the spiritual masters.

However, as explained in the text, it is appropriate that one generates respect for, and faith in, sentient beings. Earlier it was emphasised how enlightened beings and sentient beings are equal in terms of being a cause for enlightenment. Therefore one can have equal faith in, and respect for, sentient beings, as well as enlightened beings. In the example referring to respecting one's parents a distinction was made between faith and respect, but in general one develops both attitudes towards all beings.

When we relate to these explanations, we can see how Shantideva very meticulously shows how one needs to regard sentient beings, enlightened beings and one's teachers who present the teachings, in an equal light. The commentary clearly clarified that the causes for enlightenment relies fifty percent on the enlightened beings as well as the gurus who present the teachings, and fifty percent on sentient beings. Therefore, enlightened beings and sentient beings are equal in their kindness to us.

This is a presentation of the reasons why we should benefit and respect sentient beings, and not harm them. When we look into these explanations, we can see that they have a general aspect, as well as being a specific Buddhist practice. When it explains that harming sentient beings displeases the enlightened beings, and that the way to please the enlightened beings is to practise being

kind to other sentient beings, then that is a specific Buddhist practice. Whereas explaining that one should respect sentient beings and not harm them, because they have been kind to oneself, is a more general approach. We can see that this is a presentation that everyone can relate to.

Next the commentary clarifies a point, explaining that, *subdue here refers to accepting oneself as servant of the world with firmness in one's mind.*

Finally there is a resolution or pledge:

Though many beings pound my head by kicking it, or even kill me, I shall not retaliate, but bear it, and in such a way act to please the minds of the protectors of the world.

Having confessed all these actions that have harmed sentient beings, and which displease the enlightened beings, and regretting that, one pledges, 'I will see myself as a servant of sentient beings. If they *pound my head by kicking it or even kill me, I will not retaliate.* I will not become angry, and I will bear it in such a way as *to please the protectors of the world.*

By presenting such a profound pledge, we are being encouraged to resolve to practise in this way.

3.2.2. Showing subsequently as a summary that one also needs to be respectful to sentient beings

126. *There is no doubt that all these migrators
Are regarded by those possessing compassion as self.
Those seen in the identity of sentient beings
Are in the nature of the protector, why not be respectful?*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary on this verse reads:

Having meditated on equalising and exchanging self with others, the compassionate buddhas have come to regard all these migrators as self. Hence without doubt, when seeing the nature of sentient beings they are to be regarded as the very protector of oneself, since respecting them gives enlightenment. Therefore why not be respectful? It is appropriate to have faith and be respectful.

When the commentary states *having meditated on equalising and exchanging self with others, the compassionate buddhas have come to regard all these migrators as self*, the word *self* is not to be taken literally. Rather it refers to cherishing them as one would normally cherish oneself. The compassionate buddhas previously engaged in practices of exchanging self with others and developed the altruistic mind of bodhicitta. They consistently engaged in the practice of giving up cherishing themselves while cherishing other sentient beings. Having engaged in that practice, and developed the altruistic mind of bodhicitta, and then becoming enlightened, they reached the perfected state where all sentient beings are dearly cherished equally.

Without doubt when seeing the nature of sentient beings can also relate to the ultimate buddha nature in all sentient beings. It is that essence of sentient beings that will transform into the state of enlightenment. On seeing that, one regards that *as the very protector of oneself.* Having seen the nature of sentient beings in that way, and since respecting them leads to enlightenment, *Why not be respectful?* This is a rhetorical question, implying that

indeed *it is appropriate to have faith and be respectful* to all sentient beings equally.

2.2. Meditating on the benefits of patience¹

Having extensively explained how to practise patience, the text now goes on to explain the benefits of practising patience.

This section is subdivided into three:

2.2.1. In brief

2.2.2. Explaining the benefits with an example;

2.2.3. A summary of the list of benefits

2.2.1. In brief

127. *It alone pleases those gone thus,
It alone perfectly establishes the purpose of self,
It alone also clears the sufferings of the world,
Therefore I will continuously practise only this.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary on this verse reads:

To be patient and respectful when harmed by sentient beings, this alone is the supreme method for pleasing the buddhas. To work for the welfare of others, this alone is the supreme method to complete the accumulations in one's own continuum. This alone also clears the sufferings of all sentient beings. Therefore, since it perfects the two purposes, I shall continuously meditate on the three types of patience.

Earlier the text showed, with reasoning and logic, why one needs to practise patience, and be *respectful when harmed by sentient beings*, which *is alone the supreme method for pleasing the buddhas.* Also, *To work for the welfare of others, this alone is the supreme method to complete the accumulations in one's own continuum.* So working for the welfare of others becomes the supreme method to complete the accumulations of merit and wisdom.

Furthermore, as explained in the commentary, *This alone also clears the sufferings of all sentient beings.* So the supreme means to clear away the suffering of sentient beings is to practise patience, which means not retaliating, and refraining from harming other sentient beings.

Since it perfects the two purposes, i.e. the ultimate purpose for oneself and the ultimate purpose of benefiting other sentient beings, *I shall continuously meditate on the three types of patience.*

The three types of patience are:

- Not retaliating when others harm one
- Enduring suffering
- Definitely thinking about the Dharma

These three types of patience are the optimum means to please all the buddhas, they are the ultimate means to work for the welfare of others, and the ultimate means to refrain from harming other sentient beings. For all of these reasons one holds practising and meditating on these three types of patience as one's core practice.

Verse 127 has, in fact, been a summary of why one needs to respect sentient beings.

¹ At this point the numbering reverts to the larger structure of the chapter. The point where this started was 14 April 2015.

The sequence just completed began with the heading 2.1 Eliminating The Cause For Anger which was introduced on 30 September 2014. It is the second part of the heading 2 Applying the Mind To The Methods To Establish Patience.

2.2.2. Explaining the benefits with an example

This is subdivided into two:

2.2.2.1. Example and meaning from the point of view of benefit

2.2.2.2. Explaining it to be superior to the example

2.2.2.1. EXAMPLE AND MEANING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF BENEFIT

This is further subdivided into two:

2.2.2.1.1. Example

2.2.2.1.2. Meaning

2.2.2.1.1. Example

128. *For example, though some of the kings men
Inflict harm on many beings,
The farsighted people
Will not retaliate even though they can.*

129ab. *This is not because of them alone,
But due to the king's power, that is their
support.*

Then the commentary explaining the meaning:

For example, though a few people belonging to the entourage of the king harm many others, the farsighted people that look at the long-term benefit or harm, will not retaliate even though they can.

That they cannot retaliate is not just because of the entourage's power alone, but due to the power of the king.

The *example* that is clearly explained in the commentary is when *a few people belonging to the entourage of the king harm many others*. In the event that some of the king's men go out and harm others, *farsighted people* who can see short and *long-term benefit or harm, will not retaliate, even though they can*.

If some of the king's men come out and harm many people, there will be some who, through their farsightedness are able to properly assess a situation to see potential benefit or harm, and thus see the long-term benefits of not retaliating, even though they could do so if they wished. They don't retaliate *because the entourage of the king, or soldiers, are backed up by the power of the king*. Retaliation would involve dire repercussions!

2.2.2.1.2. Meaning

Then the meaning of that example is presented.

129cd. *Likewise, one should not dismiss
An insignificant harmer.*

130ab. *The wardens of hell
And those endowed with compassion are their
support.*

The commentary on these lines reads:

Likewise, as in the example, one should not dismiss any weak harmer, because they have as their support the ripening fruit of the hell guardians, and the displeasure of the compassionate conquerors and their children.

In comparison to the might and power of the king, a few of his men would be relatively weak. This refers to the fact that when the person who harms oneself is quite weak in nature, one should not think of retaliation just because they are easy to overpower. That is because it is as if they are supported by the hell guardians, and also because one would displease the compassionate conquerors and their children.

One might well be able to retaliate and easily overcome and vanquish a weak individual who harms oneself. However by contemplating and thinking about the negative karma one creates by retaliating in that way, one will realise that one would have to experience the ripening results of the hell realm and so forth.

The point is, as explained and emphasised in other teachings, that practising patience with someone who is much weaker is, in fact, a supreme practice of patience, and much more effective than practising patience with someone who is much more powerful and mightier than oneself. One is much less likely to engage in retaliation with someone who is mighty and more powerful, so practising patience then is easier. Whereas practising patience with someone who is much weaker is much harder, because it would be so easy to retaliate. But if one were to contemplate the repercussions, and the heavy negative karma that one would create, one will refrain from returning that harm.

2.2.2.2. EXPLAINING IT TO BE SUPERIOR TO THE EXAMPLE

130cd *Thus, like people and the wrath of the king,
One should please sentient beings.*

131. *Even if one gets angry at someone like a king,
Do they give the harm of the lower realms
That one will experience due to
Making sentient beings unhappy?*

The commentary of these verses reads:

Because of this one should please sentient beings like the people fearing the wrath of the king. Even if one gets angry at someone like a king, do they give the harm of the lower realms, which one will experience as a result of making sentient beings unhappy? They cannot.

People fear a wrathful king because of the severe punishments that he can impose, such as imprisonment for long periods of time, or confiscation of land and wealth, and even execution. These are the repercussions of displeasing a wrathful king. Likewise one should please and not harm sentient beings out of fear of the consequence of going to the lower realms.

Can someone as powerful as a wrathful king *give the harm of the lower realms, which one will experience as a result of making sentient beings unhappy?* This rhetorical question implies that they cannot. What is being explained is that no matter how mighty and wrathful the king may be, the most he can do is confiscate your land, or your house, or your belongings. Even if you were condemned to death the most the king has done is to take your life. But he cannot take you to the lower realms. However, when one harms sentient beings, the negativity that one accumulates from that act is definitely a cause to be reborn in the lower realms.

132. *Even if one pleases someone like a king
That which one will attain
By pleasing sentient beings,
The very enlightenment, they cannot offer.*

The meaning of this verse is presented in contrast to the earlier point, which is that while the repercussions of getting angry at a king are quite severe, you do not receive all that much in return when you please the king.

Whereas the results of pleasing sentient beings are immense. The commentary explains:

Even if one pleases someone like a king, they cannot offer that which one will attain by pleasing sentient beings, the very result of enlightenment itself.

If one were to do something that pleased a king, the most the king can give back in return is some sort of recognition, such as the medals that generals and some soldiers wear. That is the most a king can give: some sort of status or gift, but nothing more significant than that.

The king *can* definitely *not* offer that which one will attain by pleasing sentient beings, which is, as mentioned here, the result of enlightenment itself. So the most one can receive from pleasing a king is some sort of recognition, or gift. However, by pleasing sentient beings, one can obtain the ultimate result of enlightenment. Thus what one achieves from pleasing sentient beings far exceeds anything that one could gain from a king.

This also reflects on how the meaning of the example is far greater than the example itself; that what one attains is much greater than what one would obtain from a king.

2.2.3. A summary of the list of benefits

Here there are three sub-divisions:

2.2.3.1. The main result

2.2.3.2. The seen result

2.2.3.3. The ripened result

2.2.3.1. THE MAIN RESULT

The relevant lines from the text are:

*133ab. Leaving aside the future buddha
That is attained as a result of pleasing sentient
beings.*

The commentary explains the meaning as follows:

Leaving aside it being appropriate to please sentient beings and being patient with them by contemplating the benefit of obtaining buddhahood in the future a result of pleasing sentient beings, it is also appropriate to meditate on patience in relation to results ripening in this and future lives as well.

As clearly explained here, the results of pleasing sentient beings are found not only in the ultimate result of becoming a buddha oneself, but also in this and future lives as well.

Then the commentary presents a further clarification.

Although the meaning is clear, an earlier proponent says:

Since it is difficult to cognise a buddha, *for the moment* leave it aside.

Answer: It is not tenable to interpret the meaning in this way because although the phenomena of this life are easy to cognise, the extremely hidden future results are harder to cognise than a buddha. That a buddha can be cognised by depending on reason, without depending on quotations, but the very hidden meaning can only be cognised subsequently to this, accords with the view of all great pioneers.

What is being explained is the interpretation of the words *leaving aside* from the first line of the verse. An opponent says that the meaning of *leaving aside* reflects that it is very difficult to cognise a buddha. The commentary refutes this interpretation by stating that *although the phenomena of this life are easy to cognise, the extremely hidden*

future results are harder to cognise than a buddha. That is because, a buddha can be cognised by depending on reason, without depending on quotations, but the very hidden meaning can only be cognised subsequently to this. This means that understanding very hidden phenomena, like the subtleties of karma, are dependent on valid quotations which are pure of the three-fold analysis.² Thus cognising a buddha is easier than understanding subtleties of karmic results.

The ripening results of specific karmas created in a previous life can only be understood by relying on quotations that are pure of the three-fold analysis. They thus fall into the category of extremely hidden or subtle phenomena, in contrast to the qualities of the Buddha, which can be understood through logical reasoning.

In particular, the subtleties of karma, such as a particular time, the place a karma was created and so forth are said to be only seen directly by a Buddha's mind, and thus can't be seen by ordinary sentient beings.

2.2.3.2. THE SEEN RESULT

The seen or obvious results are explained in these two lines:

*133cd. In this very life one will attain great glory,
Fame and happiness. Why does one not see
this?*

Here, Gyaltsab Je explains:

Also in this life there are seen results that arise from patience, such as glory of increased excellences, being well regarded and happiness. Why does one not see this? Therefore, one should strive in making sentient beings happy.

As explained clearly, even in this life there are seen or obvious results that arise from patience, such as glory of increased excellences. As one's excellences increase and one is well regarded by others, one has a happier mind. Why can't one see these obvious positive results? This question implies that it is obvious, and that one should be able to see them. Therefore the conclusion is that *one should strive in making sentient beings happy.*

2.2.3.3. THE RIPENED RESULT

The next verse is:

*134. While circling, one will attain from patience
Beauty and so forth, absence of sickness, and
fame,
Due to which one will live very long,
And one will attain the extensive happiness of a
wheel-turning king.*

Here the commentary reads:

Also, while circling in cyclic existence one attains a beautiful form, the samsaric excellences, good health and great reputation. Through that one will have a long life. One will also have the extensive and vast happiness of a wheel-turning king.

² The three criteria for validating a phenomena are:

1. Obvious things are not contradicted by valid bare perception.
2. Slightly obscure things are not contradicted by valid inference based on the force of evidence.
3. Extremely obscure things are not contradicted by valid inference based on scriptural authority.

See the teaching of 15 November 2011 for more details.

The ultimate result of practising patience is that it becomes the cause of enlightenment. It can take a long time to achieve the state of enlightenment, but while one is circling in cyclic existence the ripened results of practising patience include, as explained here, obtaining a *beautiful form* and so forth. This is something that we can all relate to, because everyone longs to have a good, sound body and good features, as these contribute to one's good conditions. Then there are *the samsaric excellences* such as wealth, and having *good health* and a good *reputation*, which are also favourable conditions for our wellbeing. Added to those conditions, we *will* also *have a long life*.

One will have the extensive and vast happiness of a wheel turning king indicates that while in cyclic existence one can even reach the highest status of a wheel turning king.

The author of the commentary Gyalsab Rinpoche, concludes with:

In short, having recognised opposing factors such as having intense anger, intimidation from virtuous dharmas, a lack of aspiration for virtuous dharmas and so forth, one then relies on their antidotes, which are the patience that does not think anything from harm, the mind that is not harmed by suffering and abides in its natural state, and the patience strongly abiding on the wish for the Dharma due to discriminating awareness.

Thus by meditating on patience one strives to use the basis of having the freedoms and endowments.

SUMMARISING VERSE

Next, Gyalsab Rinpoche presents the summarising verse, which reads:

*Although one meditates on the virtue of
generosity and the like for eons,
They are destroyed by the fire tongue of anger.
Therefore one needs to generate the force of
patience again and again
And not give anger any chance.*

Here, Gyalsab Rinpoche very succinctly presents the need to practise patience, not just once or twice, but again and again. Only by applying the practice again and again will it become the means to actually overcome anger, and not give anger any chance to arise. Otherwise the practice of virtue and so forth will be destroyed by anger. Therefore one needs to protect oneself from that.

2. THE NAME OF THE CHAPTER

This is the sixth chapter called 'Explaining Patience' from the Introduction to the Actions of the Bodhisattvas.

The commentary concludes:

This is the commentary on the sixth chapter called 'Explaining Patience' from the commentary on the *Introduction to the Actions of Bodhisattvas*, called *The Entrance for the Children of the Conquerors*.

As mentioned last week, we will continue our sessions until His Holiness' teachings. There are three more weeks until the end of this month, so there will be one teaching followed by the discussion week, and the exam. An important thing to remember is to come to the recitation of Shantideva's text on May 24.

If you forget me it is no big deal, but forgetting Shantideva and the buddhas means forgetting the profound advice they have presented. The chapter on patience that we have just completed is such profound advice and instruction that we need to keep it in mind, and not forget it.

Indeed when we relate to the Buddha's teachings, we can see for ourselves that of all the various teachers that have come into the world, this is a unique presentation. It presents the teachings in a very unbiased way in order to benefit all beings equally. The profound instructions on how to do that, and how to practise, are very clearly explained in the Buddha's teachings. All the explanations are there, and all the ways and methods are presented clearly, so it is up to us as to whether we put it into practice or not.

Others, who are not Buddhists, have commented that the Buddha's teachings are not exclusive; rather, they are teachings that can be related to and applied by all.

Extracts from *Entrance for the Child of the Conquerors* used with the kind permission of Ven. Fedor Stracke

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