



compassion we hold feelings of anger, hatred and jealousy towards other beings, then we will end up with more misery and suffering in our lives.

Realising that whatever joy and happiness that we have found is due to the kindness of other beings, and then showing them our love and compassion, will bring us more joy and happiness.

To diminish anger and hatred, we should also reflect upon the fact that anger and hatred make our life miserable and cause us suffering as well as being harmful to other people around us, such as our friends, family members and neighbours. Although we can relate some of the causes of our problems and suffering to external factors, the main cause is our own mental attitude, which lies within ourselves.

We can also recall the verse from Shantideva's *Bodhisattva's Way of Life* which says that all the happiness that exists in the world arises from the thought of benefitting others; whereas the suffering and pain that exists in the world arises from the thought of a selfish mind. If we wish to see more joy and happiness in our lives, then the true cause is to cultivate love for other beings. In other words, wishing others to have happiness, and compassion, and genuinely wishing them to be free from suffering. When we develop this, we can find more happiness and joy. On the other hand, if we always hold a self-centred mind, always thinking about our own self, and always wishing happiness for ourselves alone we will end up with more pain and suffering. Therefore, we need to replace the self-centred mind with a mind of cherishing other beings.

We need to cultivate loving-kindness, compassion and bodhicitta. It is also important to cultivate the wisdom of emptiness. In short, we need to combine both the method and wisdom, not seeing it in terms of one or the other. Even if we have kind thoughts of benefitting others, without wisdom we can easily become confused or doubtful about the value of benefitting others. And we may sometimes end up regretting the good deeds we have done for others. These things can happen. At the same time, wisdom alone is not enough. We must also cultivate the method of developing love and compassion for others so that our lives can become meaningful for ourselves as well as for other beings.

We will now move to the next verse from the text on *The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*. Verse 23 talks about the sort of mental attitude that we should maintain when we encounter an attractive object, such as good food, beautiful clothes and so forth. It tells us what sort of thoughts and mental attitude we should maintain when we find such beautiful objects.

The verse reads:

When you encounter attractive objects,  
Though they seem beautiful  
Like a rainbow in summer, don't regard them as real  
And give up attachment-  
This is the practice of Bodhisattvas.

This verse is saying that when we believe things are beautiful, they are really only beautiful in comparison with other things. So, beauty is relative. When we think of something that appears as beautiful, attractive and appealing, it is not absolutely beautiful and attractive. If it were to be absolutely beautiful and attractive, it would mean that it has to be perfect and faultless. When a beautiful object appears to us as absolutely beautiful and appealing, that doesn't reflect the truth of that object. Therefore, this verse says, even though it

appears that way, we should not hold on to its appearance as truly beautiful and attractive.

This object is not truly beautiful and attractive because it is not perfect. It only seems to be beautiful because it looks that way in comparison to other things. Even when you say something is good or bad, it is all relative. Even though something may appear to our mind as being absolutely good and perfect, that is not the case.

So, we need to remind ourselves that even though things may appear to us as beautiful, no matter how beautiful the object appears to be, the object is in reality not as beautiful as it appears to our mind. By thinking like this, we are counteracting a degree of attachment towards the object.

In this verse, we have learnt what sort of mental attitude we should adopt when we encounter an object that appears to be beautiful.

The next verse talks about how we should think when an object appears to be ugly, horrible or miserable, and what sort of mental attitude we should adopt.

Verse 24 reads:

All forms of suffering are like a child's death in a dream.  
Holding illusory appearances to be true makes you  
weary.  
Therefore when you meet with disagreeable  
circumstances,  
See them as illusory-  
This is the practice of Bodhisattvas.

This verse says that all forms of suffering are like a child's death in a dream. It shows us what to think when we encounter undesirable situations where we are harmed and meet the causes of pain. Normally when we face that, all sorts of thoughts arise and lead to feelings of anger and hatred. It says here it is like a child's death in a dream. The reason why we experience suffering in the face of unfavourable circumstances is because our view of those situations is very fixed, as if they truly exist, as opposed to being like a dream.

For example, if someone verbally abuses or hits us, then we resent the action and hate that person. At that time, the main reason we feel strong hatred is because we hold that person as truly existing rather than being like a dream. In reality, everything simply happens because of causes and conditions coming together, not by their own accord. Nothing exists truly or inherently. If we can counteract this view of grasping at things as truly existing, then we can effectively counteract disturbing thoughts and emotions such as anger.

We will leave tonight's teaching here.

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