

**cultivating the heart of patience:
lessons from the bodhicharyavatara**



Introduction (Crosby & Skilton, 1995)

From this point onwards in the Bodhicharyavatara Shantideva allots a complete chapter to each remaining perfection, and in the sixth chapter we come to his treatment of the perfection of forbearance, kshanti-paramita.

There is an underlying structure to the chapter, and Shantideva's argument follows a number of distinct phases. The core of the chapter consists of an exposition of forbearance, kshanti, in three aspects or applications. This is indicated in the *Siksha Samuccaya*, where Shantideva quotes the *Dharmasamgiti Sutra* to the effect that forbearance is threefold in character: forbearance towards the endurance of suffering (vv. 11-21); forbearance as a result of reflection upon the teaching (vv. 22-32); and forbearance of the endurance of injuries from others (vv. 33-75). However, Shantideva's account of the threefold character of forbearance is set within a larger framework: How does one cope with anger? And why should one avoid it?

Much of his discussion of forbearance revolves around the inappropriateness of anger, for in his view anger and forbearance are to be paired as opposites, as one might an ailment and its antidote. As he points out in the first verse, all the good of all the actions so far described can be destroyed by anger. He is very concerned to make clear the dangers of hatred and the value of patience as its antidote. If the terms of his discussion seem extreme, then perhaps this juxtaposition reflects some insight into human nature on his part. Be this as it may, the first stage of his discussion of forbearance deals with forbearance towards suffering, particularly with physical endurance. A natural extension of this practice is the attempt to understand how it is that one comes to suffer. This leads to the second stage of his exposition, forbearance as a result of reflecting upon the teaching. This takes the form of a discussion of causality, which appears in vv. 22-33. is immediately apparent, even to a reader unversed in Classical Indian philosophy, that the writer is dealing here with technical arguments, which cannot be understood without some background knowledge. More, much more, of this type of material appears in Chapter 9, which deals with the perfection of understanding, but something should be said here so as to clarify the lines of his argument.

Shantideva's main concern is to explain, in fact prove (albeit briefly), that all phenomena, including those things which give pain, arise upon conditions. This is of course the main axiom of Buddhism, the crucial insight by which Enlightenment might be defined. Moreover it is used here as the main axiom of Shantideva's discussion of forbearance, for as he seeks to prove in the following verse, if the actions of people and objects are determined by a network of other conditions, how can any individual person or object be held to blame for the consequence, and, in that light, how can anger be justified?

His argument in these crucial verses is, in brief, as follows:

22-3 Other beings are motivated as impersonally as are illnesses by conditions outside of themselves.

24 We know from experience that we do not decide to become angry, but find ourselves becoming so. This is a reflection of the fact that this anger is conditioned by factors other than our will.

25 Nothing possesses the power of self-willed generation— i.e. all things are conditioned by other, external factors.

26 Nor can we say that the totality of conditions possesses such independent self-willed existence. Therefore, no suffering that we experience is the result of the volition of a discrete micro- or macro-cosmic entity.

27-8 Addressing the fundamental existents of the *Samkhya* school, Shantideva points out that the *purusa* (*ātman*, or self) and *prakṛti*, the primal substance (or physical universe in the broadest sense), which are regarded as ultimates because in themselves uncaused, are illogical concepts— something uncaused obviously does not function within the realm of causality, and could be responsible neither for our sufferings, nor for the existence of the phenomenal world, as maintained by the *Samkhya*.

29-30 Turning to the *Vaisesika* concept of an ultimately real and permanent self, Shantideva argues that this too is illogical. As before, something that is permanent does not operate upon the level of causality. Furthermore, something permanent cannot bring about changes, because to be permanent surely implies being unchanging, yet to meet with other factors and interact with them requires change.

31-3 Therefore we can now appreciate that everything is conditioned by other factors, and thereby is not responsible for its functioning, rather like a magical illusion. Knowing this reality of conditionality, we are free to give rise to conditions now, which in the future will allow us to overcome suffering. Furthermore, we are also able to understand and cope with the provocative behaviour of other people.

These general matters aside, the most ubiquitous object of frustration and anger for most people most of the time is other people, which brings us to the third stage of Shantideva's exposition of forbearance. In a Buddhist context, especially in a Mahayana context, the eschewing of anger must surely seem so fundamental that it hardly needs comment. Yet when we think about it, righteous indignation and the desire for retaliation appear as frequently, if not more so, in a religious context as in any other, and for this reason it is appropriate to note Shantideva's express concern to deny a foothold for these emotions, both in relation to the topical issue of blasphemy (v. 64), for which Buddhism has no equivalent, and in connection with the perceived inhibition of one's own capacity to practise one's religion (v. 102 ff.).

Undoubtedly the primary reason for the length of Shantideva's discourse upon the subject of forbearance is the fact that its opposite, anger, is that emotion which most clearly undermines the performance of the Bodhisattva's vow to save all beings. More radically than any other built, anger

alienates one from the very beings whom one has undertaken to save. That this was recognized, and an object of deep concern, in Mahayana circles is evinced by an early but important and influential Mahayana sutra, the *Upali-pariprccha*, in which comparison is made of the relative danger to one's fulfilment of the Bodhisattva aspiration in faults based in greed and faults' based in hatred. Judgement comes down firmly in favour of greed as the lesser of the two failings, for at the very least, when motivated by this, one is left with the possibility of being drawn to other beings, whereas hatred consists in their rejection.

If while practising the Mahayana a Bodhisattva continues to break precepts out of desire for *kalpas* as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, his offence is still minor. If a Bodhisattva breaks precepts out of hatred, even just once, his offence is very serious. Why? Because a Bodhisattva who breaks precepts out of desire [still] holds sentient beings in his embrace, whereas a Bodhisattva who breaks precepts out of hatred forsakes beings altogether. ... if he breaks precepts out of hatred, it is a grave offense, a gross fault, a serious, degenerate act, which causes tremendous hindrances to the Buddha-Dharma. (*Upali-pariprccha* Sutra, Chang 1983, 270)

Having dealt with the immediate difficulty of interaction with others, namely accepting injuries that they cause, Shantideva broadens his discussion so as to address the need to overcome envy of one's fellows—in this case particularly fellow monks (vv. 76-98). He even goes so far as to argue that one's opponents offer one the opportunity to develop this necessary virtue (vv. 99-108) and that for this reason they should be honoured on a par with the Buddhas themselves (vv. 109-18). He concludes this chapter with a lengthy and unacknowledged quotation of material in support of this view drawn from the Tathagataguhyā Sutra (vv. 119-34).

No detailed comparative analysis of this chapter in the two recensions has been made, although Saito indicates that the canonical recension has seven more verses than that from Tun-huang. We do know, however, that the following verses are shared with the *Sikṣa Samuccaya*: 94, 95a, 115, and 119-34- The following verses have partial correspondences in the same text: 10a, 14a, and 19b (the letters 'a' and 'b' refer to the first and second halves of a verse respectively).

There remain a few observations to be made upon more miscellaneous matters. The first of these concerns the terminology that Shantideva employs in this chapter. The chapter deals with what is known as the perfection of forbearance, *kṣanti-paramita*, as it is usually designated. It comes as a surprise, therefore, to find that Shantideva does not refer to *kṣanti-paramita* even once, and further that, out of the sixteen times he explicitly mentions the virtue of forbearance, on twelve occasions the word he chooses to use is *kṣama*, rather than *kṣanti*. One wonders whether this usage reflects what has come to be understood as a certain ambiguity of denotation with the latter term. It appears that, despite the traditional association of the term *kṣanti* with the verbal root *kṣam*, 'to be patient, to endure, etc.' from which *kṣama* itself is

derived, the term *kshanti* probably results from an incorrect ‘back-formation’ of a Prakrit term, *khanti*, into Sanskrit. This not uncommon phenomenon meant that the connotations of the root *ksham* were thereby mingled with those of the true root of *khanti*, *khani*, meaning ‘to be pleased, to be willing to’, with the result that one frequently finds *kshanti* employed in contexts where connotations of willingness seem more appropriate than those of forbearance. The term *kshama*, however, remains firmly unambiguous, and perhaps recommended itself to the author for this reason. In order to distinguish (perhaps unnecessarily) between these two terms when they appear in the text, we have adopted ‘forbearance’ as a translation of *kshanti*, and ‘patience’ for *kshama*.

One example of word-play which has just about survived ‘the great leap’ between languages occurs in v. 44, where Shantideva exploits the primary sense of the root *kup*, to swell or heave with anger, etc., to liken the human body to a swollen boil!

Translation used: Oxford University Press, trans. Crosby and Skilton, 1995. Alternative verses from Geshe Kelsang Gyatso’s translation.

Other, free editions available online: Berzin Archives, trans. Dr. Alexander Berzin; Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, trans. Stephen Bachelor, 1979 (alternative version here); Lotsawa House, trans. Rigpa Lotsawa Team (English, Spanish and Tibetan editions); Snow Lion Publications, trans. Wallace and Wallace, 1997; Wisdom Library, trans. Andreas Kretschmar, 2004; Asian Classics Input Project, trans. Christopher Richardson, 1999 (Tibetan edition); Bibliotheca India (Sanskrit edition), edited by Vidhushekhara, 1960; Indica et Buddhica, (Sanskrit editions), edited by Richard Mahoney.

[1] This worship of the Sugatas, generosity, and good conduct performed throughout thousands of aeons - hatred destroys it all.

[2] There is no evil equal to hatred, and no spiritual practice equal to forbearance. Therefore one should develop forbearance by various means, with great effort.

[3] One's mind finds no peace, neither enjoys pleasure or delight, nor goes to sleep, nor feels secure while the dart of hatred is stuck in the heart.

[4] Those whom one honours with wealth and respect, and also one's dependents, even they long to destroy the master who is disfigured by hatred.

[5] Even friends shrink from him. He gives, but is not honoured. In short, there is no sense in which someone prone to anger is well off.

[6] The person who realises that hatred is an enemy, since it creates such sufferings as these, and who persistently strikes it down, is happy in this world and the next.

[7] Consuming the food of dejection prepared by doing the undesirable and thwarting the desirable, biting hatred strikes me down.

[8] Therefore I shall destroy the food of this deceiver, since this hatred has no purpose other than my murder.

[9] I must not disturb the feeling of sympathetic joy, even at the arrival of something extremely unwelcome. There is nothing desirable in the state of dejection, on the contrary - the skilful is neglected.

[10] If there is a solution then what is the point of dejection? What is the point of dejection if there is no solution?

[11] Suffering, humiliation, harsh words and disgrace. These we desire neither for ourselves nor our loved ones, but for our enemies it is the reverse.

[12] Happiness is scarce. Suffering persists with no effort; but only through suffering is there escape. Therefore mind, be strong.

[13] 'In Kanata, the devotees of Durga willingly endure, to no purpose the pain of burns, cuts and worse. Why then, am I a coward, when my goal is liberation?'

[14] 'There is nothing which remains difficult, if it is practised. So through practise with minor discomforts, even major discomfort becomes bearable.'

[15] 'the irritation of bugs, gnats and mosquitoes, of hunger and thirst, and suffering such as an enormous itch: why do you not see them as insignificant?'

[16] 'Cold, heat, rain and wind, journeying and sickness, imprisonment and beatings: one should not be too squeamish about them. Otherwise the distress becomes worse'

[17] 'Their own blood for some, is valour's boon; while others, for others, produces a swoon'

Alt. 'Some when they see their own blood, become even stronger and braver, while for others, just seeing someone else's blood, causes them to become weak and even to faint.' (Geshe Kelsang Gyatso)

[18] 'This comes from the bravery or cowardice of the mind. Therefore one should become invincible to suffering, and overpower discomfort'

[19] 'Not even in suffering should a wise person allow his serene confidence of mind to be disturbed, for the battle is with the defilements, and in warfare, pain is easily won.'

[20] Those who conquer the enemy, taking the blows of their adversary on the chest, they are the triumphant heroes, while the rest kill what is already dead.

[21] The virtue of suffering has no rival, since from the shock it causes, intoxication falls away and there arises compassion for those in cyclic existence, fear of evil, and a longing for the Conqueror.

[22] I feel no anger towards bile and the like, even though they cause intense suffering. Why am I angry with the sentient? They too have reasons for their anger.

[23] As this sharp pain wells up, though unsought for, so, though unsought for, wrath wells up against one's will.

[24] A person does not get angry at will, having decided 'I shall get angry'. Nor does anger well up after deciding 'I shall well up.'

[25] Whatever transgressions and evil deeds of various kinds there are, all arise through the power of conditioning factors, while there is nothing that arises independently.

[26] Neither does the assemblage of conditioning factors have the thought 'I shall produce'. Nor does what is produced have the thought 'I am produced'.

[27] The much sought for 'primal matter', or the imagined 'Self', even that does not come into being after deciding, "I shall become".

[28] Since what has not arisen does not exist, who would then form the wish to come into existence? And since it would be occupied with its sphere of action it cannot attempt to cease to exist either.

[29] If the self is eternal and without thought processes, then it is evidently inactive, like space. Even in contact with other conditioning factors, what activity can there be of something which is unchanging?

[30] What part does something play in an action if, at the time of the action, it remains exactly as it was prior to it? If the relationship is that the action is part of it, then which of the two is the cause of the other?

[31] In this way, everything is dependent upon something else. Even that thing upon which each is dependent is not independent. Since, like a magical display, phenomena do not initiate activity, at what does one get angry like this?

[32] If it is to be argued that to resist anger is inappropriate, for 'who is it that resists what?' our view is that it is appropriate: since there is dependent origination¹, there can be cessation of suffering.

[33] Therefore, even if one sees an enemy or a friend behaving badly, one can reflect that there are specific conditioning factors that determine this, and thereby remain happy.

[34] Were all embodied beings to have their wish fulfilled, no-one would suffer. No-one wishes for suffering.

[35] People cause themselves torment, with thorns and other instruments, in a state of intoxication, by refusing food and the like, out of anger, and with things that they wish to attain, such as unattainable women.

[36] Some people kill themselves, by hanging themselves, by throwing themselves off cliffs, by taking poison or other unwholesome substances and by conduct that is devoid of merit.

[37] When under the power of the defilements, they injure even their own dear selves, how could they have a care for the persons of other people?

[38] When, driven insane by their defilements, they resort to killing themselves, how is it that not only have you no pity, but you become angry?

[40] In fact, this fault is adventitious. Beings are by nature pleasant. So anger towards them is as inappropriate as it would be towards the sky, if full of acrid smoke.

Alt. 'On the other hand, if that harmfulness were a temporary fault, and that person were otherwise good-natured, it would be just as unreasonable to get angry with him as it would be to resent space for filling with smoke.'

[41] If, disregarding the principal cause, such as a stick or other weapon, I become angry with the person who impels it, he too is impelled by hatred. It is better that I hate that hatred.

[42] Previously, I too caused just such pain to living beings. Therefore this is just what I deserve, I who have caused distress to other beings.

[43] His the knife, and mine the body - the twofold cause of suffering. He has grasped the knife, I my body. At which is there anger?

[44] Blinded by craving I have grasped this boil in the likeness of a human figure, which cannot bear to be touched. In that case, when there is pain, at which is there anger?

[45] I do not wish for suffering. Being a simpleton, I do wish for the cause of suffering. When suffering has arisen through my own wrongdoing, how can I become angry with someone else?

[46] Just as the infernal forest of razor leaves, just as the winged creatures from hell are really brought into being by my actions, so is this. At which is there anger?

[47] Those who injure me are really impelled by my actions. For this they will go to the realms of hell. Surely, it is they who are harmed by me.

[48] On account of them, because I am patient, my evil is considerably decreased. While on account of me, they experience the long-lasting agonies of hell.

[49] Really, it is I who am harmful to them, and they who aid me! So why, slippery mind, do you turn it the wrong way around and become angry?

[50] If I am not to go to the realms of hell, I must possess the virtue of determination. If I protect myself, what in that case is the effect on them?

[52] Since it lacks physical form, the mind can never be harmed by anything, but because it clings to the body it is oppressed by the body's suffering.

[53] Humiliation, harsh speech and disgrace, this collection does not oppress the body. Why then, mind, do you get angry?

[54] Will the disfavour that others show me devour me, here or in another birth, that I avoid it so?

[55] It may be that I avoid it because it gets in the way of my material gain, but that will be lost in this life alone, whereas my evil will certainly persist.

[56] Better that I die right now than have a long life lived improperly, since, even if I remain here for a long time, the same pain of death awaits me.

[57] In a dream one person enjoys 100 years of happiness and then awakes, while another awakes after being happy for just a moment.

[58] Surely the happiness of both ceases once they have awakened. That is what it is like at the time of death for the one who lives long and for the one whose life is short.

[59] And though I acquire many possessions, though I enjoy many pleasures over a long time, I shall go empty handed and naked, like someone who has been robbed.

[60] Suppose I destroy evil and perform good while living off my gains? There is no doubt but that someone who grows angry on account of gain acquires evil and destroys good.

[61] If that for which I live comes to nothing what is the point of living? Performing only unlovely deeds.

[62] If you argue that your dislike of one who speaks ill of you is because he is harming living beings, why then do you feel no anger when he defames others in the same way?

[63] You tolerate those showing disfavour when others are the subject of it. But you show no tolerance of someone speaking ill of you, when he is subject to the arising of the defilements.

[64] And my hatred towards those who damage sacred images and stupas, or who abuse the true teaching is inappropriate, since the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are not distressed.

[65] When people harm one's teachers, relatives and others dear to us, one should as above regard it as arising upon the basis of conditioning factors and refrain from anger towards them.

[66] Whether the cause possesses consciousness or not, distress is inevitable for embodied beings. That distress appears in what is conscious. Tolerate that pain therefore.

[67] Some commit offenses out of delusion. Others deluded grow angry. Who among them should we say is free from blame? Or who should we say is guilty?

[68] Why did you behave before in such a way so that others trouble you now in this way? Everyone is subject to the force of prior actions. Who am I to change this?

[69] But realising this I shall make the effort to perform good actions in such a way as everyone will develop an attitude of friendship, each towards the other.

[70] When a house is burning down and the fire has spread towards the next house any or grass or such in which it might spread is dragged off and taken away.

[71] So, when the mind is catching alight with the fire of hatred as a result of contact with something, it must be cast aside immediately for fear that ones body of merit might go up in flames.

[72] If a man condemned to death has his hand cut off, and is spared, is it not good? If, through human sufferings, one is spared from hell, is it not good?

[73] If even this small measure of suffering cannot be tolerated now, then why is anger, the cause of torment in hell, not restrained?

[74] In this very same way, on account of anger, I have been placed in hells thousands of times, and I have benefited neither myself nor others.

[75] But this suffering is not of that kind, and it will produce great benefit. Delight is the only appropriate response to suffering which takes away the suffering of the universe.

[76] If others take pleasure and joy in praising the strength of someone's virtues, why, mind, do you not similarly rejoice in praising it?

[77] Such pleasure from your rejoicing is a blameless source of pleasure. Not prohibited by the virtuous; attractive to others in the highest degree.

[78] What if you do not like it because it is a pleasure only for him? If you were to stop giving wages and like, both visible and unseen benefit would be lost.

Alt. Those who are not concerned by others' happiness, and do not want them to be happy, are like someone who stops paying wages to those who work for him, who then experiences many problems.

[79] When your own virtues are being praised, you want others to be pleased as well. When the virtues of others are being praised, you do not even want to be pleased yourself.

[80] After arousing the wakening mind, out of the desire for the happiness of every being, why are you angry at them now that they have found happiness for themselves?

[81] You desire Buddhahood, which is worthy of worship throughout the three worlds, expressly for living beings. Why do you burn inside on seeing them have some slight honor?

82 The person who nourishes someone whom you should nourish is really giving to you. On finding him supporting your family, you do not rejoice, you become irate!

[83] What does the person who wishes Awakening upon living beings not wish for them? How can one who is angry at the good fortune of others possess the awakening mind?

[84] If he had not received that gift, it would have remained in the donor's hands. In any case, it is not yours, so what matter is it whether it was given or not?

[85] What? Have him suppress acts of merit, and those who are faithful, and even his own virtues? Let him not accept when he is being given donations? Tell, with what are you not angry?

[86] Not only do you not grieve at the evil you yourself have done, you seek to compete with others who have performed acts of merit.

[87] Suppose something unpleasant does befall your rival. Would your satisfaction make it happen again? It would not happen without a cause, merely by you wishing it.

[88] If your wish was fulfilled, what pleasure would there be for you in his suffering? But even if there were some advantage in this, what disadvantage would ensue?

[89] For this is the horrific hook cast by the anglers, the defilements, from whom you will be bought by the warders of hell and stewed in cauldrons.

[90] Praise, good repute and honour lead neither to merit nor long life, are no advantage to strength or to freedom from disease, nor do they bring me physical pleasure.

[91] And this is the kind of thing that would benefit the wise person who knows what is best for himself. One desiring pleasure for the mind could resort to drunkenness, gambling and other vices.

[92] For the benefit of renown they deprive themselves of benefit. They even kill themselves. Are words fit for food? In death, who fills their pleasure?

[93] Like a child that howls a wail of distress when his sandcastle is broken, so my own mind appears to me at the loss of praise or renown.

[94] Because it lacks consciousness, I must admit a word cannot praise me. Undoubtedly the cause of my delight is that another is delighted with me.

[95] But what does it matter to me whether another's delight is in me or someone else. His alone is the pleasure of the at delight - not even a trifling part of it is mine.

[96] If I take pleasure in his pleasure, let them take it in every single case. Why do I take no pleasure in people who are made happy through their faith in another?

[97] Therefore, it is because I am praised that delight is produced in me. In this case, too, because of such absurdity, it is simply the behavior of a child.

[98] Praise and so on give me security, they destroy my sense of urgency, they create jealousy towards those who possess virtue, and anger at success.

[99] Therefore those conspiring to destroy things such as my praise, are really engaged in preserving me from descent into hell.

[100] The shackle of acquisition and honour is unfitting for me who longs for liberation. How can I hate those who liberate me from that shackle?

[101] How can I hate those who have become, as if by the Buddha's blessing, a door closed to me as I seek to enter upon suffering?

[102] Nor is anger appropriate in the case of someone who hinders acts of merit. There is no spiritual practice equal to forbearance. Without doubt this is accomplished through him.

[103] In fact, it is through my own deficiency that I fail to practice forbearance here. In this instance I alone create the hindrance when grounds for an act of merit have been provided.

[104] If one thing does not exist without another, and does exist when that also exists, then that other thing is really its cause. How can that be called an obstacle?

[105] After all a person in need who turns up at a suitable time is not a hindrance to generosity, nor can it be called a hindrance to going forth when one meets someone who has gone forth!

[106] Beggars are easy to find in this world but those who will cause harm are not, because, if I do no wrong, no-one wrongs me.

[107] Therefore, since he helps me on the path to Awakening, I should long for an enemy like a treasure discovered in the home, acquired without effort.

[108] Both he and I therefore, receive the reward of this forbearance. It should be given to him first, since the forbearance was first occasioned by him.

[109] If an enemy deserves no honour, because he did not intend you to achieve forbearance, the why is the True Dharma honoured? It too is the unconscious cause of achievement.

[110] If an enemy is not honoured because his intention is to hurt, for what other reason will I be patient with him, as with a doctor who is intent on my well-being?

[111] In that case, it is really in dependence upon his malign intention that forbearance is produced, and in that case it is really he that is the cause of my forbearance. I must worship him as the True Dharma.

[113] When the transmission of Buddha-Qualities comes equally from both ordinary beings and from the Conquerors, what logic is there in not paying that respect to ordinary beings which one pays to the Conquerors?

[114] The greatness of the intent comes not from itself but rather from its effect, and so the greatness is equal. In which case ordinary beings are the equals of the Conquerors.

[115] It is greatness on the part of beings that someone with a kindly disposition is honourable, just as it is greatness on the part of the Buddhas that merit comes from serene confidence in the Buddhas.

Alt. Whatever merit there is in venerating one with limitless love is due to the greatness of all beings, and whatever merit there is in having faith in the Buddhas, is due to the greatness of the Buddhas.

[116] Therefore in one aspect of the transmission of Buddha qualities, ordinary beings are equal to the Buddhas. Of course, none are fully equal to the Buddhas, who are oceans of virtue with unlimited aspects.

[117] If a virtue appears anywhere that is even an atom of those who are a unique mass of the very essence of virtue, then even the three worlds are not adequate to the purpose of worshipping it.

[118] Yet the very best aspect of the development of Buddha-qualities is found in relation to ordinary beings. One should worship ordinary beings in accordance with this aspect.

[119] Moreover, for those friends who give immeasurable help without pretext what better recompense could there be than propitiating beings?

Alt. "Moreover, besides pleasing living beings, what other way is there for us to repay those supreme, unchanging friends who bestow immeasurable benefit?"

[120] One should do it for those for whose sake they dismember their own bodies and enter the Avichi hell. For that reason, even if people are extremely malignant, all that is skilful should be done for them.

[121] How can I act with arrogance rather than servitude towards those very same masters for the sake of whom my Masters, of their own accord, have such lack of regard for themselves?

[122] At whose happiness the Lords of Sages become joyful; at whose distress they are sorrowful: to satisfy these creatures is to satisfy the Lords of Sages; to offend them is to offend the Sages, too.

[123] Just as no bodily pleasure at all can gladden the mind of one whose body is engulfed in flames, so too those full of compassion cannot come near to feeling joy when living beings are in distress.

[124] Therefore, today, I confess as evil the suffering I have caused to all those of Great Compassion by causing suffering to those people. May the Sages forgive that which has oppressed them.

[125] Now, to propitiate the Tathagatas, with my entire self I become a servant to the world. Let streams of people place their foot upon my head or strike me down. Let the Lord of the World be satisfied.

[126] There is no doubt that those whose selfhood is compassion have taken this entire world for themselves. Is it not the case that they appear in the form of these good people? It is these people who are the Lords. How can I be disrespectful?

[127] This alone is the propitiation of the Tathagatas. This alone is the fulfilment of my own goal. This alone beats back the suffering of the world, so let this alone be my vow.

128 When a single servant of the king tyrannizes the entire populace, the far-sighted populace has no power to effect change,

129 Because he is not really alone: his potency is the potency of the king. So one should refrain from slighting any impotent person who has caused offence,

130 Since his potency is that of the warders of hell and of the Compassionate Ones. For that reason one should propitiate living beings, just as a servant would a cruel king.

131 What could a wrathful king do that would equal the agony of hell, experienced as a result of causing misery to living beings?

[132] What could a gratified king give that would equal Buddhahood, experienced as a result of causing happiness to living beings?

[133] Never mind future Buddhahood arising from the propitiation of living beings. Do you not see good fortune, renown and well-being, right here and now?

[134] Serenity, freedom from disease, joy and long life, the happiness of an emperor, prosperity: these the patient person receives while continuing in cyclic existence.