

CULTIVATION REQUIRES PATIENCE

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Good morning everyone. Time flies and it's already December 2017. You have been here IN US for almost a year and together we have done quite a lot of things. We have traveled to all states in US. We purchased this new temple and moved. We make the floors; painted the walls; built the gardens; decorated the inside and the outside. Teacher's students came and left one by one. The gardens were planted; the flowers bloomed; and after one cycle of blooming, now they are sleeping and preparing for next cycle. Every one of us also has gone through ups and downs and all sorts of tests. Time is illusion. Everything is just manifestation of energy. Everything is illusion too. In this illusive world, have we lost ourselves? Have we been depressed, worried, or excited by the forms shown in front of us? One mind is one world. Everything around us is incurred by our mind. Cultivation is to cultivate an unmoved mind, which is the greatest wisdom in the universe. To keep an unmoved mind in this world of kaleidoscope is not easy. It needs wisdom eye to discern the truth behind; it needs courage to break through all the attachments. In short, cultivation is not a one-time thing. Cultivation needs patience.

In the past, when Shakyamuni Buddha was cultivating blessings and wisdom, he passed through three great asamkhyeya (a limitless number of) eons before he accomplished Proper Enlightenment. As the saying goes, "Don't assume a good deed is too small to do and fail to do it; don't assume a bad deed is too small to matter and

do it." When Shakyamuni Buddha was practicing the Bodhisattva Path, he didn't overlook a good deed even as small as a strand of hair, nor did he do an evil deed as tiny as a mote of dust. Therefore, his merit and virtue and his blessings and wisdom were made perfect, and he became known as the Doubly Perfect Honored One.

Although a good deed may be small, you should still make a point of cultivating that deed, because "Grains of sand accumulated over time can grow into a pagoda." Over time you will have created a great deal of goodness. If one does evil deeds, even trivial ones, they can also accumulate from few to many and can become great evil. In such a case, one will never succeed in cultivating the Way. Cultivation is nothing more than "doing no evil and respectfully performing all good deeds." If you can avoid doing any evil deeds, then your blessings will increase daily. If you can do all good deeds, then your wisdom will increase daily. Even though it increases, you still must continue to cultivate without cease; only then can you meet success.

In this meditation room, when we meditate, recite sutras and mantras, listen to dharma talks, or simply keep silent here, we are cultivating both blessings and wisdom. How are we cultivating blessing? We do so by refraining from all manner of evil deeds. How are we cultivating wisdom? We do so by offering up all manner of good deeds. In these ways, gradually we are gaining blessings and wisdom and get closer to Buddhahood. Cultivate in the present moment and be patient in the present moment.

In one of his past lives, Shakyamuni Buddha was "Never Slighting Bodhisattva," who cultivated the ascetic practice of patient endurance. Whenever he met someone, he would always bow to him and say, "I don't dare slight you, for you will one day become

a Buddha." Some people detested this behavior, so on occasion he had to endure curses and beatings while he bowed.

One time, as he practiced the Bodhisattva Path, he bowed to a person who promptly kicked out two of his teeth. He still was not disheartened, but continued to persevere in his ascetic practice of bowing. After this experience, he grew a bit more prudent and moved off to a discreet distance before making his bow and shouting out, "I don't dare slight you, for you will one day become a Buddha!" His bow done and his speech made, he would then quickly depart, and those who wanted to beat him up wouldn't be able to catch him.

Never Slighting Bodhisattva used the spirit of "having no sense of self" to cultivate blessings and wisdom. Who told him to cultivate in that way? Nobody told him to, he simply enjoyed cultivating this practice. Although it brought him curses and beatings, he never felt anger or hatred in return. Thus, he illustrates the method used to cultivate the Dharma-door of the Perfection (Paramita) of Patience under Insult.

Patience is the most important Dharma-door for cultivators. When you encounter a situation that doesn't go your way, you must bear up under it and yield to it. Don't fight with anyone. If you can cultivate, but you can't be patient and you freely let your temper go at any time, you'll burn to ashes all the merit and virtue that you cultivated through such painstaking, bitter effort.

We should ask ourselves honestly, "Do I have the patience required to bow to others, then get a beating in return, and still not feel hatred?" If you can do this, you count as

a true disciple of the Buddha. If you can't, then by all means, collect your body and mind, and make vigorous progress in your cultivation. Otherwise, you have simply wasted all your precious time without gaining anything from your work.

For cultivators, it's important to be able to endure cold and heat, wind and rain, hunger and thirst, and insults and beatings. Imitate the spirit of Never Slighting Bodhisattva: "No matter who treats me badly, I will not feel anger or hatred towards them. I will treat all people sincerely and influence them naturally with that sincerity. In this way, their hostility will be transformed into friendliness, their swords changed to plowshares.

Cultivators are working to get rid of all traces of self. When one is free of all traces of self, then one can endure any state whatsoever; and when situations arise, one's mind will not be disturbed. We want to regard ourselves as not different from empty space. We cultivate alike through both favorable and adverse situations. In other words, favorable situations do not make us happy, and adverse situations do not make us sad. We want to clearly recognize the arising of both favorable and adverse states. If we can remain "Thus, thus, unmoving," then situations will not disturb us. If we can "understand and be constantly clear," then we will be able to turn around the situations that arise. When Shakyamuni Buddha cultivated in ages past, he specialized in the Dharma-door of patience, so he became known as the Patient Immortal. One day, without provocation, he was dismembered by King Kali. Even so, he felt no hatred towards the king. Instead, he pitied the king for his ignorance. He said, "In the future when I become a Buddha, I will take you across first." Upon hearing those words, King Kali felt deep remorse and requested to take refuge with the Patient Immortal. In a

later reincarnation, he was the Venerable Ajnata-kaundinya, one of the first five Bhikshus who realized the fruition of Arhatship upon hearing the Buddha expound the three turnings of the Dharma-wheel of the Four Noble Truths. Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, cultivated the skill of patience to the ultimate point, so that there was absolutely no way to stir him to anger. As the Buddha's disciples, we should learn the skill of patience from our teacher. In short, patience is one of the most important of all methods of cultivation, and cannot be ignored or overlooked.

The ancients said, "Be patient for a moment, and the storm will subside. Retreat a step backward, and the sea and sky will open up in all their vastness." That is why we say that "patience is a jewel beyond price." No matter what happens, I still won't be attached, get angry, or feel hatred. If everyone could think the same way as I do, then the world would know peace.

Patience is something cultivators cannot be without. Only with the power of patience can we cultivate. Without patience, all talk of cultivation is in vain. The principle I discussed today is quite ordinary-sounding and very flavorless. However, it is true Dharma, proper Dharma, wonderful Dharma, the rarest of Dharma. Although it is quite ordinary, the Way comes forth from the most ordinary places. The Way is something that people walk on with their feet.

Everything is a test

To see what you will do.

If you do not recognize the state,

You will have to start a new karma.

No matter how bad the situation is, we should be able to smile at our troubles and accept them. We shouldn't let adversity upset us, nor should we bow our heads and surrender to them. There's an ancient saying, "If one cannot be patient with small issues, one will ruin a great plan." Patience is a priceless jewel. Having taken flak from everyone, one discovers a joyful vitality of heart.

Thank you for your patience! Thank you for listening!