

## Patience, Patience

In Buddhism we have the teaching of the Six Paramitas, the six bodhisattva practices that carry us from this shore of samsara, to the other shore of truth or enlightenment. Today I would like to reflect on the second paramita, which is “patience.”

In Buddhism, we have to have patience in following the path. As they say, Rome wasn't built in a day. We can't expect to understand it all in a day or two. It takes time and patience. When young people first take a martial art, like Karate, right away they want to know, “How long will it take me to get my black belt?” It takes years to earn a black belt and it takes time to come to understand the heart of the Buddha-Dharma. How long you might ask? One year? Two years? Five years? I would say that it takes our whole life. Listening and learning in Buddhism is a lifelong enterprise. It is a lifelong undertaking.

The great Buddhist thinker, D.T. Suzuki, who is perhaps most responsible for introducing Buddhism to the west, when he was 95 years old, he had a five-year plan for what he wanted to study and research. For D.T. Suzuki, his study of the Dharma was a lifelong undertaking.

During this Coronavirus pandemic, I think that the word “patience,” takes on a new meaning. It feels like many people are reaching the “breaking point,” meaning that they are so sick and tired of being cooped up and not able to go out to restaurants, to bars, to stores, to the beach, that they are on the verge of exploding. Maybe that is why when about a week ago when they opened up the beaches in our area in Orange County, people flocked to the beaches.

This is a time in which as Buddhists, we can apply our teachings to help us face and endure this difficult, stressful, and anxious time. We can practice patience. We have to stick it out. We have to endure a little more this stay at home time, to help prevent the spread of the virus, or else it might become even more worse and deadly.

But it is not easy. Personally, I am dying to go to Las Vegas, but of course it is closed still. It seems like another lifetime ago that we went to Vegas and enjoyed the restaurants, the casino, and the shows. But we have to be patient, and we have to endure.

We might need to practice patience at home. Family members might be getting on each other's nerves. Parents are trying to work from home, do home schooling for their kids, and not have any outlet of going out and getting away for a spell.

I heard a funny statement from someone who said, “Well, we haven't killed each other yet,” and I know this was a joke, but we can all relate to that to some extent, can't we? Truly, everyone's patience is being tested during this shelter at home period.

I recall a wonderful quote from the novel, Siddhartha, by Herman Hesse, which is a classic novel. In the novel, the main character, Siddhartha, experiences renouncing the secular world, much like the historical Buddha did. During his time of religious practice, he didn't have material things like a home, nice clothes, or three meals a day.

But Siddhartha said, "I can think. I can wait, and I can fast." That was what he was able to do.

I cannot fast for even one day, but I think that all of us can do the other two, we can think, and we can wait. It might not be easy, but we can wait this out, we can practice patience. It might last a long time, but it won't last forever. If we can wait, we will be able to endure it.

May we choose this time to practice patience, patience and more patience.

Namuamidabutsu,

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