

PST September 2026 Shantideva workshop: impermanence

Notes and translation by Lama Linda, Karma Yeshe Chodron

Part 1: Keep impermanence in mind, in order to prioritize

From the Karma Kagyu Ngondro: impermanence and death, reminder 2

Secondly, all things will end, / this world and all that it contains.

Life is fragile as a bubble, / death will come, I don't know when.

When I am dead and just a corpse, / there's nothing that can help me then

Except the dharma I have practiced – / the only true, unfailing thing.

From Ngondro ordinary preliminaries, the four reminders

Shantideva verses on impermanence:

Those I hate will cease to be, / and those I love will cease to be,

And I myself will cease to be; / and so we all will cease to be. (2.35)

Everything I have enjoyed / is like a memory or dream;

All things past will fade like this / never to be seen again. (2.36)

"Today, at least, I'm safe from death!" / To sit at ease and think like this

Is not correct. The time will come: / most definitely, I'll be gone. (2.58)

Keep impermanence in mind, but in a healthy way:

If there is a remedy, / why any anxiety?

And if the problem can't be fixed, / how does worry help with it? (6.10)

"I keep impermanence in mind,

but I don't worry about the ceiling fan falling on my head."

Lama Norlha

Part 2, next page: how to practice

Part 2: How to practice while we still have this opportunity:

a. With joyful diligence, 24/7

(remembering the dharma, including impermanence, as much as possible)

From the 37 practices of a bodhisattva: verse 1

1: To study, contemplate, and meditate

This precious human life so hard to find, / its freedoms and resources like a boat
To navigate samsara's endless sea / and set myself and other beings free –
Without distraction, always, day and night / to study, contemplate, and meditate:
This is the way a bodhisattva trains.

Shantideva

Re-lect-ing thus on this ad-vice, / I'll prac-tice now with dil-i-gence.
Was any pa-tient ever cured / by dis-re-gard-ing doc-tors's words? (4.48)

This human boat can set you free / from suffering's enormous sea;
Another boat is hard to find, / so don't sleep now, fool! Use this time! (7.14)

b. some specific aspirations to keep dharma in mind and use our time well

As long as any being is ill, / till ev-ery sickness has been healed:
May I myself take care of them / as doctor, nurse, and med-i-cine. (3.8)

In every place where famine strikes / may I turn into food and drink,
And come down as torrential rain / to ease the hunger, thirst and pain. (3.9)

For beings destitute and poor / may I become a treasure trove
Of everything they need and want / appearing right in front of them. (3.10)

To benefit all sentient beings, / I give my virtue of three times;
I offer, holding nothing back / my body, goods, enjoyments. (3.11)

Part 3: Dedication

As long as sky and space exist / and beings are still wandering,
For just as long may I remain, / dispelling all their suffering. (10.55)