

Lesson 5: Overcoming Anger

Learning Outcomes

- Foster appreciation and understanding of the art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region.
- Cultivate a greater awareness of how the afflictive emotions manifest in our lives.
- Discover how to incorporate Help Now strategies from the SEE Learning® Playbook to overcome afflictive emotions.

Primary Core Components

Attention and self-awareness

Recommended Materials

Disposable soup containers, colored masking tape, rubber bands, balloons, string/yard, beads, scissors, and markers

Length:
50 minutes

Grade Levels: Upper elementary
school through high school

1. Check-In Activity

Explain to students that there is a corresponding wisdom that helps us overcome each of the afflictive emotions. It is taught that we can surmount anger by developing the wisdom of clarity. When we experience anger, our minds are often clouded. This can cause us to behave reactively. We may lash out at others or shut down.

The element that is associated with this section of the Mandala Lab is water. When we look at our reflection in the water, we see clearly. Pausing in the midst of anger and applying one of the Help Now strategies outlined in the SEE Learning® Playbook can help us to regain our sense of clarity.

Instruct the students to turn to page 26 in the SEE Learning® Playbook. A list of Help Now strategies is listed there. Invite the students to turn and talk to a neighbor about which Help Now strategy they find the most useful in the midst of anger. Then have students share with the class.

2. Presentation/Discussion

About Akshobya

Akshobya is one of the Buddhas of the Five Families. Each Buddha is associated with a cardinal direction. You can discover more about the Buddhas of the Five Families as you explore the Mandala Lab. Akshobya presides over the eastern direction. Akshobya means “The Unmovable.” It is taught that he helps practitioners to master anger. According to Buddhist teachings, anger is one of the main afflictions that perpetuates the endless cycle of death and rebirth.

Project an image of Avalokiteshvara.

About Avalokiteshvara



Avalokiteshvara; Tibet; 13th century; brass with inlaid silver and pigments; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; C2005.16.29

Avalokiteshvara is the patron deity of Tibet. Avalokiteshvara appears in countless forms, including peaceful and wrathful, with four arms, six arms, one thousand hands and eyes, and 11 heads. Here is Avalokiteshvara in his simplest form, standing and extending his right hand in the gesture of supreme generosity and holding the stalk of a lotus (now broken) in his left hand. The goddess Tara is the female counterpart of both Amitabha Buddha and the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

This sculpture is remarkable for its fluid simplicity of form and graceful proportions. In terms of iconography, bodhisattvas are bejeweled with armlets, necklaces, and crowns. This figure has translucent drapery and large hoop-like earrings. The reddish tone of the metal where the gilding has worn away indicates a high copper content, which is typical of the Nepalese aesthetic.

3. Insight Activity

Avalokiteshvara is the bodhisattva of compassion. Invite the students to turn to page 24 of the SEE Learning® Playbook and engage in the SEE Learning® Practice: Self-Compassion through Positive Self-Talk. After the students have finished writing invite them to share their strategies for encouraging themselves in the midst of situations that provoke anger.

4. Reflective Practice

Project an image of a *damaru*.



Hand-held Drum (*Damaru*); Tibet or Mongolia; early 20th century; wood, silk, leather, cornelian gemstone; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; gift of Robert and Lois Baylis; SC2019.3.5

Damarus are important ritual instruments within Tibetan Buddhism. They are double-sided drums. The *damaru* is played in the right hand by twisting the wrist and causing the strikers to beat against the drum skin. The drum skin of this *damaru* is made of leather. The strikers are composed of a semiprecious stone, and the drum itself is made of wood

Alternatively, the drum skin can be made of animal hide or snake skin. *Damarus* belonging to the wealthy are often made of ivory. The *damaru* is commonly placed next to the two principal ritual objects of Tibetan Buddhism, the vajra and the bell. The dissipating sound of the *damaru* represents impermanence. *Damarus* are used as an aid during meditation to increase focus and awareness of the practitioner's emotions.

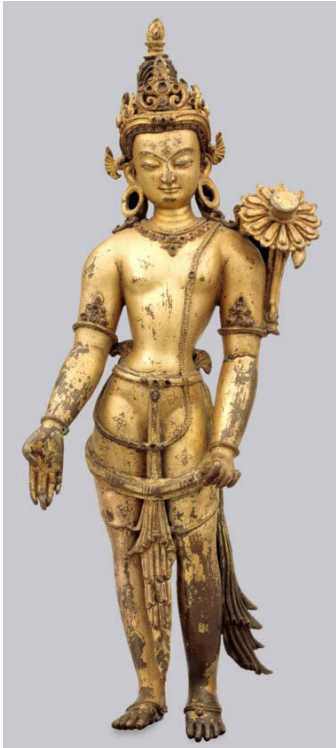
Explain that today we are going to be creating our own *damarus* to reflect on the connections between sound and emotions. Instruct the students to start by taping the bottom of both containers together to form an hourglass shape. Then, give the students balloons and scissors. Instruct the students to cut off the end of each balloon, and stretch the balloon over the top of each container. (For students with an allergy to latex, nitrile gloves can be used as an alternative.) Next the students secure the balloons in place with a combination of rubber bands and masking tape. Afterwards wind yarn or string several times around the center of the drum (the narrowest part of the hourglass, where the two containers meet). Affix beads to the ends of the piece of string or yarn. Please note that the piece of string or yarn should be long enough that when the students hold the drum in one hand and twist their wrist the beads will hit the drum heads. Instruct the students to decorate their *damarus* in a way that is meaningful to them.

5. Debrief

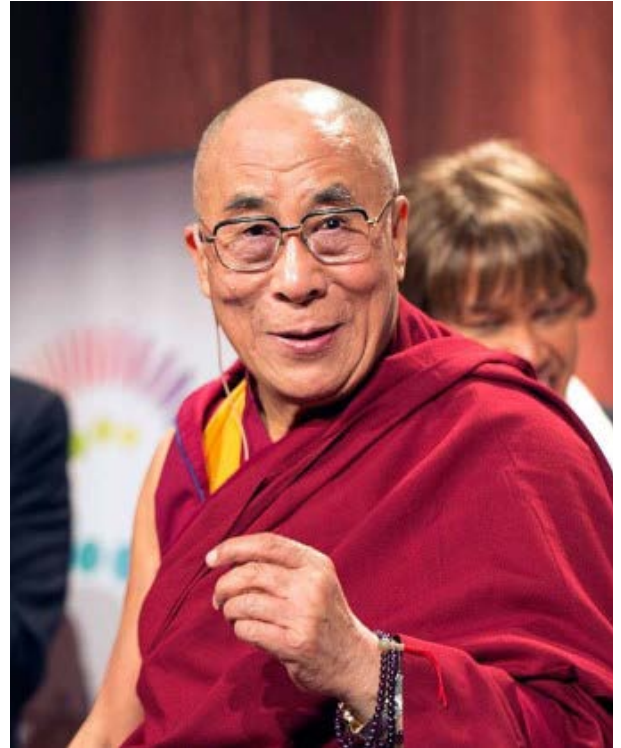
Encourage the students to keep their *damarus* in a place that they hold dear. When they feel an afflictive emotion such as anger, they can sound their *damaru* to return their attention to the present moment. This will help if their mind is lingering in the past, recalling a difficult situation. The *damaru* can also serve as a visual and auditory reminder to engage in self-compassion. It can be used in tandem with mindfulness of the breath.

6. Follow-Up and Extension Activity

Project an image of another Avalokiteshvara from the Rubin Museum collection.



Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara; Nepal;
13th-14th century; gilt copper alloy
with semiprecious stone inlay; Rubin
Museum of Himalayan Art; C2005.16.8



His Holiness the Dalai Lama

One of the most recognizable mantras in the world is *om mani padme hum*. It is associated with the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. Practitioners recite this mantra with the intention of increasing their level of compassion. Advanced practitioners visualize Avalokiteshvara and aspire to make their body, speech, and mind indistinguishable from his. Tibetan Buddhist practitioners consider His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be an emanation of Avalokiteshvara.

The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art Core Values of Teaching

Social and Emotional Learning	Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning® values and skills play an integral role in our educational offerings.
Dynamic / Differentiated	We aim to meet our program participants at every education, knowledge, language, and creative skill level by dynamically differentiating our program lessons and activities for a variety of levels of learners.
Inquiry-Based	We follow an inquiry-based learning methodology that employs question posing and problem solving as primary ways to engage students in active and empowered learning.
Relevant / Relatable	As a global museum dedicated to the arts and cultures of the Himalayas, we strive to make our unique content relevant and relatable to the contemporary lives of our visitors and program participants.
Exploration-Focused	We challenge students to find their creative voices and visions through process-based art making that allows them to explore new types of material techniques, artistic processes, and creative ways of thinking and making.
Culturally Attuned	We actively collaborate with members of the Himalayan and Himalayan-American communities to ensure the most accurate and just representations of the Himalayan people, arts, cultures, religions, and histories in our programs.
Teamwork	We strive to create programs, activities, and a supportive learning environment that cultivates creative collaboration between peers and across all generations of visitors.

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