



Nalandabodhi Connecticut

Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"The lazy person cannot benefit others.
The lazy person is far from enlightenment."
-*The Sagaramati Requested Sutra*

This month's paramita is that of perseverance, diligence, or enthusiastic effort. The *Collection of Abhidharma* defines this paramita in the following way:

"What does perseverance mean? It is the antidote for laziness. It is having total joy in virtues."

The commentary to the *Ornament of Mahayana Sutra* states that its essence is having perfect joy in virtue. In his commentary on the six perfections, Bardor Tulku Rinpoche further defines the perfection of diligence as consisting of three different forms of diligence. The first of these is armor-like diligence, which refers to not being timid about the austerities of practice and thus developing commitment. The second is diligence of application, which refers to immediately applying your commitment to practice rather than procrastinating. The third is the "diligence that is never content", which refers to never being satisfied or content with our degree of virtue.

The perfection of diligence is presented as having three main characteristics: commitment, application, and never being satisfied. Often, even if we are very committed to the path and our practice, we are tempted to put off our practice; and attend to the details of ordinary life. Bardor Tulku Rinpoche quotes Longchenpa as stating:

"Ordinarily the only time you will finish with mundane endeavors is at the moment of your death, but you can be finished with them by abandoning them. All of these things we do, and that we are so busy with, are really like the games of children. Therefore when you generate the wish to practice, then rather than allowing yourself to be carried away by procrastination, exhort yourself with the recollection of impermanence, and never defer practice for any future time."

We should avoid procrastination and laziness in our practice. *Engaging in the Practice of Bodhisattvas* states:

"Just as I would swiftly stand up
If a snake came into my lap,
Likewise if any sleep or laziness occurs
I shall quickly turn them back."

The Jewel Ornament of Liberation by Gampopa refers to three forms of laziness that we should be especially careful to avoid: listlessness, disregard, and gross laziness. Listlessness refers to being attached to the joys of torpor such as sleep and restfulness. It is taught that these should be avoided because there is simply no time for them in this life. *Engaging in the Conduct of Bodhisattvas* explains "For as long as death is approaching, then shall I

accumulate merits." Disregard refers to feelings of discouragement that stem from the belief that we are inadequate. Avoid such disregard for yourself and your capabilities. Gampopa quotes that it is said "If they develop the strength of their exertion, even those who are flies, mosquitoes, bees, and insects will win the unsurpassable awakening which is so hard to find." Gross laziness refers to being attached to non-virtues such as destroying enemies and accumulating wealth. Gampopa points out that these are the direct cause of suffering and should thus be avoided. Additionally, at the time of our death none of our belongings nor any of our wealth can serve as a refuge to us. Hereafter, through the maturation of the result of our actions we will be thrust into our next life. It is said in *Engaging in the conduct of Bodhisattvas*:

"Although I may live happily for a long time
Through obtaining a great deal of material wealth,
I shall go forth empty-handed and destitute
Just like having been robbed by a thief."

Thus we should be diligent to avoid afflicting emotions, diligent in accomplishing virtue, diligent in benefiting other beings, and be insatiable in our perseverance until the achievement of enlightenment. The benefits of the paramita of perseverance are widely taught. The *Bodhisattva Bhumis* states:

"By fully perfecting the paramita of perseverance,
bodhisattvas attained the unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment,
are attaining complete enlightenment,
and will attain complete enlightenment."

The *Ornament of Mahayana Sutra* also states:

"Through perseverance one achieves all their wishes while in samsara."

In the *King of Samadhi Sutra* the Buddha expounds several benefits to the paramita of diligence such as not digressing from teachings we have heard, not forgetting teachings we have heard, and hearing new teachings we have not heard before, due to our own exertion and practice.

In closing consider the following comments by Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche on the perfection of enthusiastic effort:

"Generosity, discipline, and patience contribute to a rational and wholesome way of life. Things begin to come together and run smoothly in a very dignified manner. This is a joyful and uplifting experience. No matter how much we perform generosity or discipline or patience, it is a joy rather than a burden. In this way we begin to develop diligence, which is joy in the practice of virtue."

The following announcement was forwarded to the Nalandabodhi Sangha by Donna Gomme and I thought some of you might find it of interest:

The Gaden Tsawa Monks will be returning to Connecticut the week of April 18-23. The website for the monks is <http://www.gaden-tsawa.org> See the site for more information about programs offered by the monks.

Donna hopes that members of the Sangha will be able to take advantage of the programs offered by the monks and the Doctor of Tibetan Medicine traveling with them. For more information or to make arrangements for programs please contact Donna Gomme at:donnagomme@yahoo.com