



Nalandabodhi Connecticut  
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"For the one whose mind is distracted  
Dwells between the fangs of afflicting emotions."  
-Engaging in the Conduct of Bodhisattvas

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According to the tradition of Gampopa training in action bodhicitta is divided into three types of training: training in superior morality, training in superior thought, and training in superior wisdom. The three paramitas we have already covered this year; generosity, morality, and diligence, are included within the training in superior morality. The paramita of patience is seen as a support for all of the three types of training. This month's paramita, that of meditation, focuses on training in superior thought. Gampopa states in *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* that even though you may have mastered the previous paramitas, "without a clear and focused mind your practice is referred to as scattered. Under the influence of such scattering your mind is wounded by the fangs of afflicting emotions." *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* further clarifies:

"Without the accomplishment of calm abiding,  
One cannot achieve clairvoyance.  
Likewise without the achievement of clairvoyance,  
One cannot benefit sentient beings."

Here, clairvoyance does not refer to a form of extrasensory perception. It refers to being able to see the true needs of the beings that surround us free of our delusions and distractions. It means seeing all things exactly as they are. Many teachers have discussed the positive qualities developed through meditative concentration. *The Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* states:

"Through meditative concentration, inferior sensual objects are abandoned."

*The Accomplishment of Dharmadhatu Sutra* states:

"Through mental absorption, one will see all of reality perfectly,  
as it is. By seeing all reality perfectly, as it is, a bodhisattva will  
develop great compassion toward all sentient beings."

In his discussion of the paramita of meditation, Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche states, "when the mind is undistracted, there is a calm and clear state of wakefulness, with a quality of firmness and stability." He describes the perfection of meditation as having both mundane and spiritual benefit. In the mundane sense the stability of mind gained through meditation prevents us from being so easily shaken by external circumstances. The lack of permanence and stability in the external world becomes less disappointing for us. On the spiritual level we develop deeper insight into the true nature of things. We see that happiness and suffering are not caused by exclusively external phenomena. We see that our own kleshas and confusions must be worked

out as well. Seeing this we will actually begin to develop some skillful means and as a result become of more benefit to others.

In his discussion of the perfection of meditation, Bardor Tulku Rinpoche states, "attachment and desire are perhaps the greatest impediments to the development of fundamental meditative stability. As long as you are not content with what you have, as long as you wish for more than you have, and as long as you are afflicted by this, your mind cannot rest." Thus one can see how the perfection of generosity acts as a foundation for the perfection of meditation. He describes the basic characteristic of the perfection of meditation as "a state of mind in which there is no fixation on anything whatsoever." In *Bodhisattva Bhūmis* it is said that "The mind abides one-pointedly on virtue."

In order to achieve this state *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* states that one should avoid distraction and isolate the mind from discursive thoughts. The cause of agitation is described as attachment to sentient beings (such as children and spouse), attachment to wealth (such as food and material things) and attachment to fame and praise. It is said in *Engaging in the Conduct of Bodhisattvas*:

"Whatever fame and renown I have amassed  
Have no power to accompany me.  
By the piling up of whatever objects  
You are attached to,  
Misery a thousandfold will ensue."

Abiding in solitude is described as the antidote to these agitations. To isolate the mind from discursive thoughts the following meditations are suggested:

"To remedy attachment, contemplate ugliness.  
To remedy hatred, contemplate loving-kindness.  
To remedy ignorance, contemplate interdependent origination.  
To remedy jealousy, practice equalizing yourself and others.  
To remedy pride, practice exchanging yourself and others.  
If you have equal afflicting emotions or discursive thoughts,  
Then practice watching your breath."

Two aspects of the perfection of meditation are described in the *Ornament of Mahayana Sutra*. These are calm abiding and special insight.

"Because the mind perfectly abides  
In absorption with mind,  
And because of fully discriminating all phenomena,  
They are called calm abiding and special insight."

This is clarified for us by Gampopa in the *Jewel Ornament of Realization*. "Calm abiding refers to perfect absorption of mind with mind. Special insight means clearly discriminating what is right and what is wrong on that basis." It is this special insight, based upon an undistracted mind, that allows us to be of the greatest benefit to other beings.

In closing, and as a summary of this and the last four newsletters, consider the following statements: from *The Jewel Ornament of Realization*:

"Generosity dispels poverty, morality achieves coolness, patience endures hatred, perseverance applies to the Supreme One, meditation brings the mind inside"

or as expressed in the *Ornament of Mahayana Sutra*:

"Dispelling poverty,  
Obtaining coolness and enduring hatred,  
Applying to the supreme and holding the mind inside,  
Realizing the ultimate meaning."

Within our own minds lies the main impediment to our mastery of the six paramitas. Meditative concentration can allow us to calm the kleshas and afflicting emotions that unsettle our minds and make it difficult for us to see the true nature of all. As is explained in *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, the mastery of meditative concentration that allows us to hold our minds within stillness will increase the effectiveness of all the paramitas, will increase the merit and virtue of our actions, and will increase our ability to benefit all beings.

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For further information you may wish to consult:

**The Jewel Ornament of Realization** Gampopa, Transl. Khenpo Konchog Gyaltzen Rinpoche. 1998. Snow Lion Publications. pp. 179-182, 219-231.

**Dharma Paths** Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, Laura Roth ed. 1992. Snow Lion Publications. pp. 186-195.

**Living in Compassion** Bardor Tulku Rinpoche. Transl. Lama Yeshe Gyamtso. 2001. Rinchen Inc. pp. 137-139.