



Nalandabodhi Connecticut
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"For effort, nothing to do,
Other than practice continuously."
-Milarepa, The Song of the Six Perfections

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This month we explore the practice of diligence. Normally we think of diligence as being something we need to work at, something that requires constant effort. The perfection of diligence refers to taking great joy in practicing virtuous actions of body speech and mind. It refers to being constantly engaged in practice without the need for intense effort. We derive great joy from and have great interest in our practice.

As beginners we often do not have much interest or devotion. We need to put effort into developing true diligence. A lack of diligence generally indicates that we do not truly understand the dharma and the future benefits of practice. If we truly understand the dharma and the benefits of practice then we will be naturally diligent.

In his presentation on the perfection of diligence Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche discusses two forms of diligence. The first is "consistent diligence." We need to be diligent not just for a day or two, but in a regular and consistent way. Whatever time we set aside for practice each day should be observed regularly. Such effort leads us to develop joy in our practice. Our consistency helps to make our diligence effortless.

The second type of diligence is diligence in applying devotion. This is a remedy for laziness. Diligence in applying devotion means being cognizant of our tendency to be lazy or hesitant about our practice, and then overcoming that through our devotion to the dharma. If we are not mindful of our own laziness, and put off practice for one day, we will then put it off again the next day and a pattern will develop in our behavior. We should use our devotion to the dharma to overcome this tendency and devote ourselves more completely to our practice.

We often tend to think of diligence, or effort, as one of the paramitas. However, it can more precisely be thought of as being applied to all of the paramitas. We must strive to be diligent in our practices of generosity, patience, and moral conduct. Without diligence none of these other practices can truly reach perfection. Perfection of diligence means to practice all of the other perfections without the need for constant effort and prodding, but with joy and energy. As stated by Milarepa "for effort, nothing to do other than practice continuously." When our practices of generosity, patience, and moral conduct become an effortless part of our daily activities, then Milrepa tells us, we have achieved perfect diligence.

May all beings benefit.

The information presented in this newsletter is based upon a teaching given by Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche in June 1984 at KTD Monastery in Woodstock, New York as presented in the text "[Transforming Mental Afflictions and Other Selected](#)

[Teachings](#)" available from [Namse Bangdzo Bookstore](#).

A complete translation of Milarepa's Song on the Six Perfections translated by Ken McLeod is available [here](#)