



Nalandabodhi Connecticut  
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"It is easier to meditate than to actually do something for others.  
I feel that merely to meditate on compassion is to take the passive option.  
Our meditation should form the basis for action,  
for seizing the opportunity to do something."

*-His Holiness the Dalai Lama*

Volume 4 Numbers 3-4

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In this month's double issue of the Paramita newsletter we will examine Tai Situ Rinpoche's presentation of the perfections of patience, or forbearance, and also that of diligence. As with the previous teachings, Tai Situ Rinpoche presents forbearance and diligence as having 3 aspects each.

The three aspects of forbearance are explained as refraining from hurting those who have hurt us, coping with whatever suffering we have to endure, and having confidence in the path. Refraining from hurting those who attempt to hurt us really refers to not allowing the actions of others to truly do us harm. If we allow the things that others do to increase our anger, or to stir up our disturbing emotions, then it is at that point that the other person really does us harm. If instead we recognize both the perceived attack and our habitual reaction to it for just what they are, and do not lash out, then at that point this attack on us ceases to be a cause of suffering. It can actually become an opportunity for diligent practice. Tai Situ Rinpoche reminds us that while this is easy to say, it is very hard to practice. But, in fact, if there were no one with anger, then we would never have the opportunity to practice patience. The point here is not to simply allow others to abuse us, but to prevent ourselves from being led into an argument or from being swept away by our emotions. In that way we can respond to difficult situations in a skillful manner.

In the same way the second aspect of forbearance, coping with suffering, does not imply that we should look for suffering or even be happy to suffer. Again this refers to not allowing ourselves to be swept away by the emotions that may arise when something causes us suffering. When we suffer we should most definitely seek to put an end to that suffering. Seeing both the suffering and our reaction to it for what they truly are again creates an opportunity for diligent practice. It allows us to react to that suffering in a skillful rather than reactionary fashion.

Dealing with either the suffering of another who attempts to hurt us, or with our own suffering, we must be patient with ourselves and have confidence in the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha taught that suffering arises from causes and conditions and that there is a path of practice that can bring an end to this suffering. When confronted with difficult situations we should constantly remember to seek our inspiration in the Three Jewels and apply ourselves to our practice. When we routinely seek to use our lives to the fullest extent possible, doing good for others and deepening our understanding of the true nature of things, then we have cultivated this third aspect of the practice of forbearance.

Such diligence in our practice also has three aspects: armor like diligence, applying our knowledge to our way of life, and never being satiated with accumulating merit. Tai Situ Rinpoche explains that armor like diligence refers to the thought "from this moment on, I will use this precious human existence to attain realization of the ultimate truth for the sake of all beings, so that I may lead them away from

suffering and all its causes." Having formed such a heart felt conviction serves us like armor, protecting us from the power of laziness in all its forms. It prevents laziness from pulling us back and diminishing our efforts.

In applying our understandings to everyday life we must make an effort to get away from any negative influence that may arise. We must accumulate whatever is positive and make that an integral part of our lives. In doing so we should seek to exert ourselves in the effort of doing whatever is good and beneficial for others. We start with what is easy for us and then devote ourselves to working towards our ultimate goal. Tai Situ Rinpoche instructs that we can begin by refraining from hurting anyone and then develop from there to the point where we can actual help them.

The final aspect of diligence is to develop a deep sense of dissatisfaction with samsaric existence. This refers to a constant longing to deepen our understanding of the dharma so that we may bring an end to the suffering that both we ourselves and those around us experience. Tai Situ Rinpoche quotes an unspecified teaching that states:

"Even if you are going to die tomorrow morning  
Still you should learn more,  
Even if you have helped everybody,  
Still you should help them once more."

We should never be satisfied with our positive accumulations; always recommencing our practice from the very beginning, from the tiniest, simplest things. When we see something that could be done to benefit beings, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, we must act on that opportunity to benefit others. In the same way whatever is harmful to others we must stop, no matter how small a matter it may be. Each of us must take responsibility for even the smallest of actions. As Tai Situ Rinpoche states: "If we consider one drop as nothing, then the whole ocean is nothing, since it is composed of drops. If, however, we can accumulate the individual drops, one by one, then this one day may make a whole ocean." Go forth; collecting your drops, and you yourself will create an ocean of compassion and loving kindness.

*May all beings benefit.*

*Editors note:*

*Please accept my sincere apologies for the lack of a newsletter last month.  
A great deal of travel last month presented difficulties.*

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The information presented in this newsletter is based upon a teachings by Tai Situpa Rinpoche presented in the book "Way to Go." This text is out of print but excerpts related to The Six Perfections can be downloaded at the [Samye Ling](#) website.