



Nalandabodhi Connecticut
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"Before, this mind went wandering
However it pleased, wherever it wanted, by whatever way that it liked.
Today I will hold it aptly in check
As one wielding a goad, an elephant in rut."
- *Dhammapada 23*

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As with his other presentations, Tai Situ Rinpoche breaks this month's topic, the perfection of meditation, into three different aspects.

The first of these three aspects is the development of an "inner awareness" that allows us to become familiar with the true nature of our mind. Without the practice of meditation it is not possible for us to truly perfect our practices of generosity, morality, patience, and diligence. If we lack the inner awareness provided by meditation it is difficult for us to examine the state of our mind and the motivation that underlies our practice. To develop this sense of inner awareness we engage in the practice of shamatha. By making our mind more tranquil we become more aware of everything that arises within it.

This leads us to the second stage of the perfection of meditation. Here, Tai Situ Rinpoche explains, we do not seek a simple blank, blind, stillness. Instead we seek a state in which mind itself recognizes its own clarity and luminosity. Tai Situ Rinpoche explains this as the ordinary second aspect of the perfection of meditation.

This ordinary second aspect then leads to the realization of the extraordinary second aspect of the perfection of meditation: Bodhicitta. Mind's realization of its own clarity and luminosity leads to the development of the mind of Bodhicitta. Realization of ultimate Bodhicitta leads to a state that is free of notions such as "Who is meditating?" "Meditating upon what?" "Meditating in which way?"

The final aspect of the perfection of meditation explained by Tai Situ Rinpoche is that we practice all of the above with proper motivation. All of the ordinary and extraordinary aspects described above should be supported by the aspiration to benefit all beings accompanied by a sense of loving-kindness and compassion for all.

Tai Situ Rinpoche explains that it is this base of great openness that leads to the achievement of Buddhahood. It is this motivation of great compassion that leads to the qualities and activities of the Buddha that benefit others. Impartial calm meditation, rich in awareness of itself, and beyond triplicity only becomes full realization when based upon an altruistic motivation.

Whenever we practice shamatha, a visualization, or tonglen, Tai Situ Rinpoche instructs that we practice the meditation in the following stages:

- First we make our mind ready to meditate, we pacify it using the techniques of shamatha.
- As a result of this our mind becomes peaceful but a sense of clarity is absent from this peacefulness. We focus our mind and bring a sense of lucidity to our meditation.

- Finally, this peacefulness and clarity must be set within the framework of proper motivation; the wish to help others.

When these three conditions are met then we can view our practice of meditation as being a full practice. Simply "zoning out" in a blank and peaceful state will have no results beyond making us feel relaxed and comfortable and free from nervousness. It does not lead to the fruition of Buddhahood. Even the skillful practices of the Vajrayana such as visualizations and the like are merely just another "head trip" unless practiced with the proper motivation. Without the motivation of Bodhicitta no practice can lead us to the full realization of our mind's true nature or ultimate truth.

May all beings benefit.

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.