



Nalandabodhi Connecticut
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"As the samaya of the Jewel Family,
Always practice the four kinds of generosity
-*The Vows of the Five Families*

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As the new year begins we begin a new cycle of teachings on the six perfections. This next cycle of teachings is based upon the instructions of Patrul Rinpoche presented in his text *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. We begin with Patrul Rinpoche's teachings on the perfection of generosity contained within his instructions for the extraordinary preliminaries of the Ngondro practice.

In his discussion of the perfection of generosity Patrul Rinpoche classifies generosity into three categories: material giving, giving dharma, and giving protection from fear. Material giving is further subdivided into three types: ordinary giving, great giving, and exceptionally great giving. Ordinary giving is said to refer to giving material objects.

The amount given is not as important as the intention with which it is given. The merit of giving even a small amount exceeds that of giving great riches with an inappropriate intention. Giving should be free of selfishness and motivated by supreme bodhicitta. Patrul Rinpoche teaches "if you let yourself be a slave to your selfish attachment, the point might come where even if you had all the wealth in the world it would still not seem enough" for you. We need to reduce our desires and learn to be content with whatever we have.

Great giving is explained as giving to someone else something rare or very precious to you. Exceptionally great giving refers to giving one's body or life to another. In all of these cases it is important that the act of giving not give rise to remorse or have a selfish motivation. Perfect giving must be completely free of attachment. It should be accompanied by mindfulness of the emptiness of giver, given, and recipient.

Giving the Dharma refers to leading others to spiritual practices by giving them instruction, sharing texts, and explaining the Dharma. However, Patrul Rinpoche clarifies this by saying "working for the good of other when your own selfish desires have not yet disappeared would be nothing but a show." For this reason giving the gift of Dharma to another is quite difficult. Patrul Rinpoche explains that "to expound a teaching to others without having experienced it oneself will not help them at all." We should be careful that we fully understand what we share with others and do not introduce misconceptions to them. We must be able to "devote ourselves entirely to others, without concern for our own peace and happiness, and without relaxing our efforts for an instant."

"Abandon Evil Doing.
Practice virtue well.
Master your own mind.
This is the Buddha's teaching."

Giving protection from fear means doing whatever we can to help others in difficulty. For example:

- Providing refuge to those without any shelter.
- Giving protection to those who are defenseless.
- Being with those who have no other companion.

It refers particularly to preventing killing whenever it is within our power to do so. The Buddha taught that of all relative good actions, saving beings' lives is the most beneficial.

The practice of the perfection of generosity might be summarized as follows: to act for the benefit of other beings, without remorse or selfish motivation, whenever it is within our power to do so. Our actions should represent love and tolerance and result from the aspiration to free all beings, without exception, from the bonds of ignorance that cause them to cycle endlessly in the sea of suffering.

May all aspire to such a goal in this new year. May all beings benefit!

The information presented in this newsletter is based upon teachings presented by Patrul Rinpoche presented in the text "[Words of My Perfect Teacher](#)." This text is available through [Namse Bangdzo Bookstore](#).