



Nalandabodhi Connecticut
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"The whole world we travel with our thoughts,
Finding nowhere anyone as precious as one's own self.
Since each and every person is so precious to themselves,
Let the self-respecting harm no other being."

- *Samyutta Nikaya*

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This month we examine Patrul Rinpoche's teachings on the paramita of discipline. He describes transcendent discipline as consisting of three acts: avoiding negative actions, undertaking positive actions, and bringing benefit to others.

Avoiding negative actions refers to refraining from the ten negative actions of body, speech, and mind. These are:

<i>Negative Actions of the Body</i>	<i>Negative Actions of Speech</i>	<i>Negative Actions of Mind</i>
Taking life	Lying	Covetousness
Taking what is not given	Sowing discord	Wishing harm to others
Sexual misconduct	Harsh words	Wrong Views
	Worthless chatter	

Patrul Rinpoche instructs that we should avoid these negative actions "like poison." He quotes:

*Do not take lightly small misdeeds,
Believing they can do no harm:
Even a tiny spark of fire
Can set alight a mountain of hay.*

We must always be mindful of our actions and the motivation for those actions, rejecting any thoughts or actions that are not directed towards the benefit of all beings. Instead we should strive to undertake positive actions. Positive actions are often described as being the opposites of the ten negative actions described above. The ten positive actions are:

<i>Positive Actions of the Body</i>	<i>Positive Actions of Speech</i>	<i>Positive Actions of Mind</i>
Protecting the lives of beings	Truthfulness	Benevolence
Practicing generosity	Reconciliation	Wishing to help others
Celibacy or Fidelity	Pleasant speech	Cultivating wisdom

Recitation of prayers

and mantras

These positive actions can be summarized as an unconditional vow to never commit any of the ten negative actions, but to always work for the benefit of all beings. It is not merely that we cease negative actions, but the motivation behind that cessation, that constitutes the transcendent practice of engaging in positive actions. Patrul Rinpoche instructs that we should do whatever good we can, renouncing even the smallest harmful act, and do so dedicating all of the merit so attained to the benefit of all beings. He again quotes:

*Do not take lightly small good deeds,
Believing they can hardly help:
For drops of water one by one
In time can fill a giant pot.*

Finally, with respect to bringing benefit to others, Patrul Rinpoche teaches that the time for working directly to benefit others is when we are free of wanting anything for ourselves. At that time we will be able to employ skillful means without our judgment being clouded by ignorance. Until then Patrul Rinpoche suggests that the best way for us to benefit others is to dedicate to them all of the merit that we accumulate through undertaking positive actions and avoiding negative ones.

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](#).