

**The Dewdrop Digest**  
**Connecting Children, Youth and Sangha**  
**Clouds in Water Zen Center**  
**Sunday, January 20, 2008**

*Cherish, love, help and protect all beings  
– people, animals, plants and minerals –  
including myself,  
just for the sheer joy of doing so.*

***Six Principles of Enlightened Living: Wisdom and Compassion in Action***

Our topic this year is *The Six Principles of Enlightened Living: Wisdom and Compassion in Action*. This quarter, we're exploring how the *paramitas* as a whole embody the path of the bodhisattva – encapsulated in the lines above. We are focusing on three *paramitas* in particular:

**Virtue:** Upholding the Precepts; Helping, not harming

**Patience:** Relaxing into trust in difficult situations

**Joyous Effort:** Wholehearted (spiritual) work that includes joy, rest and play

**Practicing with children and youth**

One of most vital ways that adults can support the spiritual development of children and youth is to explore the practice yourself, in a way that is very kind and gentle toward yourself. For example, when cultivating patience, the aim isn't behavior management, to "be patient". The aim is to accept your feelings and yourself, just as you are – and often that will clear the negative feeling. In a tense moment, you might be to take some time (a few breaths, or step into another room) to truly and deeply accept the anger or impatience. If we release the energy and return to calm and trust, YAY. If the energy persists, then perhaps we can soften into it, make friends with it, give it compassion and acceptance. Returning to the situation, perhaps with anger lingering, we may be able to treat others with the same compassion and understanding and trust that we gave ourselves – but perhaps not. And then we accept that too. Being gentle and accepting of oneself, each step of the way, we model that it truly is OK to be just who we are, each moment. We model that being kind to our big feelings may help to make them smaller, and then naturally we are able to treat others with kindness. We model trust in ourselves, the people around us, and the world. If we explore practicing the *paramitas* from a place of trust and compassion – rather than fear and the desire to control our behavior and others – we give ourselves - and the children and youth in our lives - an immense spiritual gift.

**Home practice – same as last week**

- Bring the *paramitas* into daily life: Post the *paramitas* on your fridge, practice, notice-out-loud-and-without-judgment what you observe, discuss at meal time.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade on up: Parents and children memorize the basics of each of the six principles. You could make a chart or flipcards with English and Sanskrit names
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade on up: Students have practice plans and will record what they observe.

*Six Principles of Enlightened Living: Wisdom and Compassion in Action*

Common meaning	Sanskrit	Interpretations that we will explore this year
(1) <b>Generosity</b> , giving, openness.	Dana	<b>Giving &amp; receiving</b> with attention, from the heart. Cultivating a <b>generous view</b> of ourselves, others and the world.
(2) <b>Virtue, morality</b> , ethical conduct, self-discipline, impeccability. Not harming, integrity, honesty.	Sila	<b>Upholding the precepts</b> . Speaking and acting with compassion and integrity. <b>Helping, not harming...</b> <i>Three Wonderful Precepts for Young Children: 1. Protect life. 2. Act with generosity. 3. Speak honestly and listen deeply.</i>
(3) <b>Patience</b> , tolerance, acceptance, endurance. The strength of mind and heart that enables us to face the challenges and difficulties of life without losing our composure and inner tranquility.	Kshanti	<b>Relaxing</b> . Cultivating the ability to relax, to exhale, to be loving and compassionate -- in the face of challenges such as criticism, aggression, misunderstanding. It is a remedy for anger. It is <u>not</u> denying or repressing anger (or other “negative” emotions and thoughts). Patience is returning to trust, to peace, to a generous view of ourselves, others and the situation.
(4) <b>Effort</b> , energy, enthusiasm, diligence, perseverance, courage, vigor, vitality.	Virya	<b>Joyous effort</b> . Applying oneself to one’s (spiritual) practice with energy, enthusiasm, diligence and courage... <u>and</u> with joy, lightness, laughter, and playfulness. Work, play, rest – self-care and helping others – are all included.
(5) <b>Meditation</b> , presence, awareness, mindfulness, concentration, contemplation	Dhyana	<b>Awareness</b> . Cultivating the ability to be focused, centered and aware in the present moment, to see what is going on, to calm the mind. E.g., paying attention to ones senses, body, breath, reactions, emotions, and thoughts; sitting meditation, walking meditation; chanting; visualization; yoga; martial arts; prayer; connecting to nature; cooking, eating and cleaning with reverence.
<b>Wisdom</b> , the supreme wisdom that knows the interconnectedness of all things, <i>pranja paramita</i>	Prajna	<b>Understanding life</b> . Seeing the truth of connectedness behind the illusion of separateness. Knowing that I am not separate, that I am deeply connected to all beings. Knowing that the universe holds me, with perfect love and complete acceptance, each moment. Cherishing, caring, helping and protecting others come naturally, knowing that “my” happiness and “their” happiness are not separate.

**Question, idea, concern?** Your feedback is very welcome, appreciated and important! Contact Children's and Youth Practice Coordinator Katharine Krueger at 651-222-6968 x5 or cp@cloudsinwater.org