

THE SIX PARAMITAS – GENEROSITY

“The essence of generosity is the mind of letting go. What is the mind of letting go? It is letting go of attachment and clinging. Normally, we have a mind that is very tight. Often it is related with ego-clinging and selfishness. If you do not let go of that, then even if you are generous, and it looks like you are helping others, actually, it is based on self-interest. Maybe it is better than doing nothing, but once you are generous, when you help someone, and you gain power, money, fame, or whatever from that, in the end, this will turn into something bad. You will use this as an ego-booster and, eventually, it will harm others and yourself. So these things do not count as generosity.

From our side, when it comes to actions, we try our best to help our friends, family, colleagues, society, and the world. At the same time, do not let the mind be too tight on the result. The most important thing is your heart – the mind of letting go. This is the essence of generosity, and whatever act that comes from the mind of letting go will be very beneficial and benefit you and others and also the world.”

..... Mingur Rinpoche, *The Essence of Generosity*

“Generosity doesn’t mean that we ourselves have to become poor, having given away absolutely everything that we have. We’re not talking about poverty as some virtue, that you might have in other religions. It means the willingness to give without hesitation, without obstacles – if it’s appropriate to give. We have to use discrimination. You don’t give a gun to somebody to go out and shoot: “Oh, I’m being generous. Here’s the gun.” “Here’s money to go buy a gun.” “Here’s money to go buy drugs.”

Even if we’re extremely poor and we have nothing, we can still have the willingness to give. Otherwise, poor people can’t develop generosity. That’s why when we see a beautiful sunset, be generous: “May everybody enjoy this beautiful sunset. May everybody enjoy this beautiful scenery. May everybody enjoy the beautiful weather.” Be generous with things that we don’t own as well as things that do belong to us. And it’s the opposite of miserliness; miserliness is: “I don’t want to share it, anything, with anybody else. I want to keep it for myself. If I give to somebody else, there won’t be enough for me.”

..... Alexander Berzin, *Study Buddhism*

For a time Zen monk Shohaku Okumura didn’t want to receive gifts from others, thinking that he should be giving, not taking. “When we understand this teaching in this way, we simply create another standard to measure gaining and losing. We are still in the framework of gaining and losing,” he wrote. When giving is perfect, there is no loss and no gain.

..... from *Soto Zen Journal*

“Generosity is a willingness to give, to open without philosophical or pious or religious motives, just simply doing what is required at any moment in any situation, not being afraid to receive anything. Opening could take place in the middle of a highway. We are not afraid that smog and dust or people’s hatreds and passions will overwhelm us; we simply open, completely surrender, give. This means that we do not judge, do not evaluate. If we attempt to judge or evaluate our experience, if we try to decide to what extent we should open, to what extent we should remain closed, the openness will have no meaning at all and the idea of paramita, of transcendental generosity, will be in vain. Our action will not transcend anything, will cease to be the act of a bodhisattva.”

... Chogyam Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*

LIFE IS SO DIFFICULT, HOW CAN WE BE ANYTHING BUT KIND? Sylvia Boorstein