THE SIX LIBERATING ACTIONS

At the center of the Great Way (sanskr.: Mahayana) is the path of the Bodhisattva.

Fundamentally, this path is characterized by the motivation to lead all beings to liberation and enlightenment. The practical implementation of this path is expressed in the "Six Liberating Actions" (sanskr.: Paramitas).

They are called Liberating Actions because they lead out of a narrowed, ego-centered concept. One gradually begins to understand that subject, object and action are parts of a wholeness.

If one is rooted in the desire to act for the good of all beings, one develops more quickly and can be more useful.

In this way, Liberating Actions can be implemented more and more consciously and naturally in life. What initially requires a conscious effort becomes spontaneous and effortless with time.

The Six Liberating Actions are:

1. Generosity
2. Meaningful behavior
3. Patience
4. Joyful effort
5. Meditation
6. Wisdom

The first four of these six compassionate actions describe characteristics of any joyful human relationship.

In meditation, the experience from the first four actions is internalized and the mind becomes increasingly stable, powerful and joyful. The wisdom that arises directs our actions in the right direction with the natural realization of doing meaningful things. Quantity gradually becomes quality.

1. Generosity is the giving of immediate necessities such as food, money, first aid, and the like; secondly, giving to beings what will help in the long run: Inspiration, protection, knowledge, education, good upbringing, time, etc.; thirdly, living a life for others as an example: One develops oneself so that all may benefit, thus one lives Buddha's example in everyday life. Generosity creates trust and openness, makes every encounter rich and dissolves attachment in one's own mind.

2. Meaningful behavior keeps human exchange going and is the basis for more growth. It means resolving causes of difficulties, developing oneself, making one's own life meaningful and benefiting others as much as possible.

3. Patience creates distance from difficulties and goes in two directions: Patience with oneself and with others. One who is full of compassion and can remain relaxed in any situation cannot be disturbed by anything. Since anger destroys all built-up good impressions in an instant, Buddha calls the state of patience "the most beautiful but most difficult garment to wear."

4. Joyful effort includes perseverance and means that one simply enjoys doing something useful, thus defeating one's passivity at the same time. "For anyone with life experience, the meaning of these four behaviors should be obvious: Generosity creates connections, meaningful behavior makes them supple, by means of patience one secures them, and joyful effort makes them grow." (Lama Ole Nydahl)

5. Meditation creates distance in the mind. Thus, in life, one increasingly gets the choice to participate in the comedies and avoid the tragedies. In Buddha's teaching, the five deeds mentioned are often compared to legs that have strength. However, wisdom makes them go in the right direction.

6. Wisdom means a complete understanding of all things. It overcomes the idea of the independent self of a person and a really existing external world. One understands that beyond space and time something ultimately true exists always and everywhere. Only the conscious mind fulfills these characteristics and, with perfect realization, can therefore express its open, clear and unlimited capacities for the benefit of all.