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# MENLA NEWS ENGLISH 1

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## Generosity, Social Work and Meditation



**„<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.“**

„The gesture of giving seems to be the foundation for meditation and prayer, not the other way around.“

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In the last couple of days I've been contemplating about these verses from Matthew and wanted to share with you how I understand them. I hope my interpretation on Jesus' teachings such as timelessness, love and God's compassion awaken in every one of us.

Buddha teaches us that a Bodhisattva's six virtuous actions (Paramitas/ Perfections) are set up and recommended as a way of reason and realization to allow the nature of the unborn mind of God to enfold and blossom. Amazingly, the six Perfections of a Buddha do not begin with meditation, prayers or mantras but with compassion and generosity. This

is similar to what Jesus said to his students. The gesture of giving seems to be the foundation for meditation and prayer and not the other way around. This is certainly the reason why Jesus gave little instruction about practice, but always fervently recommended to his disciples to show compassion and to help others. St. Francis of Assisi stressed a very similar behaviour. He said, "If one of you is deep in prayer and a brother or sister is in need of your help, then you should stop meditating immediately and help him or her."

I think that many Buddhists and non-Buddhists, deep in Samadhi of desperation searching for their "personal Buddha Nature" would certainly find it disturbing to be interrupted during their meditation. Sadly, over the years, I've come to realize that for many meditation is not the right way. Rather than meditation as a means of enforcing self-grasping and selfish behaviour, social work with the sick and needy would certainly have been better. Saint Francis of Assisi just as Jesus saw this danger. That's why they put so much value into helping others, for example, caring for the elderly, orphaned and sick.

## „The consciousness of God manifests itself incessantly in everything.“

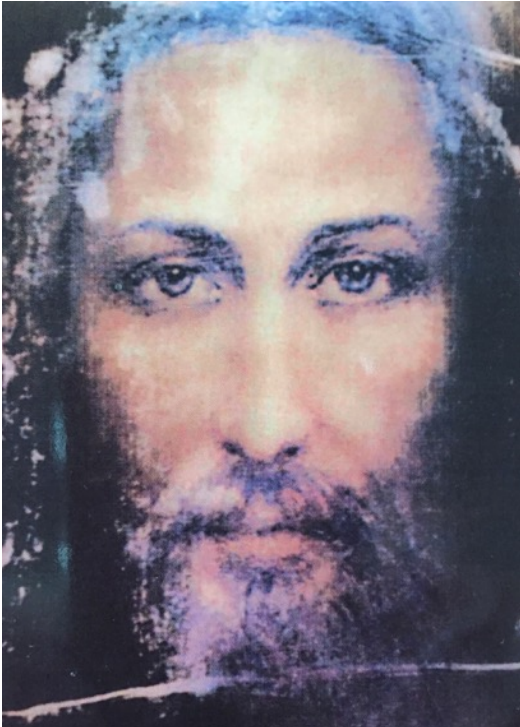
**„<sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’“**

Here we must go deeper in our understanding of the parable. Jesus exemplifies the situation at the time of death. The message is not only for those present but also describes how the content of the store consciousness manifests itself at the time of death and reveals all actions made with body, mind and speech.

When asked "Where have you been, oh, Lord?", Jesus tries to respond with pictures and to explain that the timeless and present presence of God is in everything and that this gesture of giving is ultimately not only a homage to God, but also to yourself, as you are the other. This is not easy to understand for the Abrahamic faiths, especially from the dualistic view of Christianity where the separation between God and his creation, between subject, object and action have become the credo of the Christian teaching. The timeless and unborn presence of God is like the



„If one of you is deep in prayer and a brother or sister is in need of your help, then you should stop meditating immediately and help him or her.“  
(St. Francis of Assisi)



„Every gesture towards "someone else" is a gesture towards oneself.“

***40 And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."***

Jesus affirms that everything is born of the consciousness of God, that there cannot be anything outside of God. We are his children and emerged from his timeless love. Hence the name Abba - Father, which Jesus reiterates to better represent the closeness between God and humans.

Generosity seems to be the first virtue. Two types of accumulations are mentioned in the classical Buddhist texts. The first is defined as accumulation of merits. Positive imprints and seeds of virtue are put into the mind consciousness. One also speaks of good karma or accumulations of positive actions with body, mind and speech. The second is the accumulation of wisdom and represents the removal of duality as the prerequisite for the flowering of the mind of God. The two are actually inseparable from each other. The wisdom of the unborn mind of God, the supreme and undefiled consciousness, is only possible through accumulation of merits on a relative level. Both accumulations are practiced together, but only the second form of giving ultimately has validity, because it is free from a subject carrying out the action and thus free from expectations.

As long as there is a subject who carries out an action, intentions and expectations will always be present, and thus the cause of the suffering will not stop. Acting out of wisdom is portrayed in this precious text through the omnipresence of God in all sentient beings: "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

May this text inspire you.

Love and Light from Assisi, Claude

This newsletter has been translated into English by Matthew Feedback, many thanks!