

The Six Paramitas  
Las Vegas Sangha Class  
March 9 & 10, 2013

1. What is a Paramita?
  - a. "Perfection" or "completeness"
  - b. Refers to the perfection, completeness or culmination of certain virtues.
  - c. It outlines the way of purification of karma, and helping the aspirant to live an unobstructed life while reaching the goal of enlightenment.
2. Etymology (where the word comes from)
  - a. Purama, meaning highest, most distant, chief, primary, most excellent.
    - i. Madhyantavighaga, vol. 4 – where 12 excellences are associated with 10 perfections.
  - b. Para = beyond, the furthest bank, shore or boundary.
  - c. Mita = that which has arrived, that which goes.
3. Eightfold Noble Path to Six Paramitas
  - a. Modification from original Eightfold Noble Path
    - i. Eightfold Noble Path
      1. Wisdom
        - a. Right View
        - b. Right Thought
      2. Ethics
        - a. Right Speech
        - b. Right Conduct
        - c. Right Livelihood
      3. Meditation/Mental Concentration
        - a. Right Effort
        - b. Right Meditation
        - c. Right Mindfulness
    - ii. Six Paramitas
      1. Dana or Perfection of Generosity
      2. Sila or Perfection of Morality/Ethics
      3. Ksanti or Perfection of Patience
      4. Virya or Perfection of Effort
      5. Dhyana or Perfection of Meditation
      6. Prajna or Perfection of Wisdom
    - iii. Do you see a similarity?
4. Dana or the Perfection of Generosity
  - a. True generosity or generosity beyond generosity.
  - b. The giving with the sincere desire to benefit others without any benefit in return.
  - c. Unconditional giving. No selfishness attached to the giving.
  - d. Story of Ryokan

- e. 3 Kinds of Gifts
    - i. Material items.
    - ii. Fearlessness – comfort and protection to one who is afraid.
      - 1. Giving encouragement.
    - iii. Share the Dharma
  - f. Key is your intention.
  - g. Other types of Dana
    - i. A smile.
    - ii. A handshake.
    - iii. A wave to say hello.
    - iv. Kind eyes.
    - v. Kind words.
    - vi. Greeting someone.
    - vii. Sincerely act
    - viii. Giving up your seat
    - ix. Being a host.
  - h. Story of the old man and the heavy cart.
  - i. Story of the Boy Scout helping the elderly lady across the street.
  - j. Wisdom and Compassion
  - k. Why do we love our pets so much? What do we get from them?
5. Sila or the Perfection of Ethics/Morality.
- a. The practice of Wisdom and Compassion.
  - b. The story of the Coconut Monk.
  - c. It is not found in a list of rules.
  - d. Three types of Morality
    - i. Morality as restraint
      - 1. Releasing whatever binds us to ignorance and suffering/dissatisfaction.
      - 2. The beginning of the journey.
    - ii. Morality as Virtue
      - 1. Grounding morality in mindfulness.
      - 2. Ceases to be a restraint on one's behavior, then becomes a genuine concern for others.
    - iii. Morality as selfless act of compassion
      - 1. An expression of Wisdom.
      - 2. Hakuin, "From the sea of effortlessness, let your great uncaused compassion shine forth."
  - e. Actions are guided by Wisdom and Compassion.
  - f. Balance
    - i. Do not become too attached to rules or precepts.
6. Ksanti or the Perfection of Patience
- a. Not one of the original Eightfold Path.
  - b. Patience, Tolerance, Forbearance (refraining from the enforcement of something that is due), "able to withstand"
  - c. The Story of Hakuin.
  - d. Three types of Ksanti

- i. Enduring Hardship
      1. Suffering/dissatisfaction – pain, disease, loss.
      2. Accept the First Noble Truth – Life is bumpy road.
      3. Life is stressful and difficult.
      4. We try to avoid suffering because we try to protect our “permanent” self. We all try to avoid suffering, yet everyone gets sick, dies and suffers.
    - ii. Patience with Others
      1. When we are insulted or mistreatment from others, our ego rises. We get angry. We try to get even. We become hateful.
      2. “Hell is something we create ourselves and blame on other people.”
      3. Anger is one of the Three Poisons (Anger, Greed and Ignorance).
      4. We all get angry. We need to learn how to deal with Anger.
      5. We need to be mindful of others and respond to them with loving kindness.
    - iii. Accepting the Truth
      1. Accepting that there is suffering/dissatisfaction.
      2. Accepting that we are selfish.
      3. Accepting that we are ultimately responsible for our own unhappiness or dissatisfaction.
      4. Accepting that there is uncertainty. We can’t always know the answer or the future.
      5. Zen saying, “Empty your cup.”
- 7. Virya or the Perfection of Effort
  - a. Mental and physical energy.
  - b. Note when we have strayed away from our intended activity and/or goal.
  - c. Story of my friend and his garden.
  - d. Three types of Virya
    - i. Development of Character
      1. A commitment to cultivate the will to walk the path as far as it goes, for as long as it takes.
      2. Correcting bad habits.
      3. Conviction.
      4. We all have second or third thoughts, and are scared (fear).
      5. We all have doubt.
    - ii. Spiritual Training
      1. Just do it!
      2. Don’t depend or rely on the teacher or the Sangha.
      3. Study Buddhism
        - a. Teachings

- b. Rituals
    - c. Find a teacher.
  - iii. Benefiting Others
    - 1. Practice for the benefit of others.
    - 2. Bodhisattva ideal – to reach enlightenment for the benefit of others.
  - e. It is not an instant realization of enlightenment, but a gradual one.
    - i. Example of incense in your clothes.
- 8. Dhyana or the Perfection of Meditation
  - a. Concentration, meditation, contemplation and mindfulness.
  - b. Training of the Mind – “Monkey Mind.”
  - c. Story of Cudapanthka.
  - d. Discipline.
  - e. In Asia, what we know as meditation (sitting quietly) is not the majority of practice.
  - f. In Pure Land Buddhism, sitting meditation has been replaced by chanting.
  - g. Focus upon.
- 9. Prajna or the Perfection of Wisdom
  - a. Without Wisdom, no other Perfection is possible.
  - b. Three aspects of Prajna
    - i. Academic knowledge and education.
    - ii. Cutting through your own deception.
    - iii. Interconnectedness
      - 1. If I am always right, then why do I need anyone else?
  - c. Now the sixth Paramita is Prajna  
 If you think you’re wise, you’re full of bologna  
 But when you experience, “I don’t know.”  
 Then natural wisdom is everywhere you go.
  - d. No self. The problem arises when we think of ourselves as unique, special and distinctive.
    - i. This creates fear, greed, jealousy, prejudice and hatred.
  - e. Wisdom gives rise to Compassion.