

# Beginner's Course - 9

## The Six Paramitas



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## Lesson 9: The Six Paramitas

The Sanskrit word paramita means to cross over to the other shore. Paramita may also be translated as perfection, perfect realization, or reaching beyond limitation. Through the practice of these six paramitas, we cross over the sea of suffering (samsara) to the shore of happiness and awakening (Nirvana); we cross over from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment. This is the path of the Bodhisattva—one who is dedicated to serving the highest welfare of all living beings with the awakened heart of unconditional love, skillful wisdom, and all-embracing compassion.

1. Bồ Thí - Dāna paramita: generosity, giving of oneself
2. Trì Giới - Śīla paramita : ethics, discipline.
3. Nhẫn Nhục - Kṣānti (kshanti) paramita : patience.
4. Tin Tấn - Vīrya paramita : diligence
5. Thiền Định - Dhyāna paramita : meditation-concentration
6. Trí Tuệ - Prajñā paramita : intuitive wisdom

### The Perfection of Generosity (Dana Paramita)

The perfection of selfless giving.

1. Monetary or things of value, volunteer time and efforts
2. Giving of Dharma
3. Giving of deliverance from fear.

### The Perfection of Ethics (Sila Paramita)

The precepts are the foundations of a spiritual practice.

In undertaking to preserve the precepts within ourselves we are not following rules blindly. They are guidelines to help us cultivate a harmonious life with other beings.

1. Not kill or destroy life
2. Not to covet or steal
3. Not to engage in sexual misconduct
4. Speak the truth
5. Not to intoxicate oneself if drugs or alcohol

### The Perfection of Patience (Kshanti Paramita)

This paramita is the enlightened quality of patience, tolerance, forbearance, and acceptance.

The essence of this paramita of patience is the strength of mind and heart that enables us to face the challenges and difficulties of life.

We embrace and forbear adversity, insult, distress, and the wrongs of others with patience and tolerance, free of resentment, irritation, emotional reactivity, or retaliation.

We cultivate the ability to be loving and compassionate in the face of criticism, misunderstanding, or aggression.

With this enlightened quality of patience, we are neither elated by praise, prosperity, or agreeable circumstances, nor are we angry, unhappy or depressed when faced with insult, challenge, hardship, or poverty.

### **The Perfection of Joyous Effort / Enthusiastic Perseverance (Virya Paramita)**

This paramita is the enlightened quality of energy, vigor, vitality, endurance, diligence, enthusiasm, continuous and persistent effort. In order to practice the first three paramitas of generosity, virtuous conduct, and patience in the face of difficulties, we need this paramita of joyous effort and perseverance.

### **The Perfection of Meditation (Dhyana Paramita)**

This paramita is the enlightened quality of concentration, meditation, contemplation, samadhi, mindfulness, mental stability.

### **The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita)**

- The awakened realization of truths which illuminate all and destroy darkness of ignorance and ego.
- The supreme wisdom of realizing emptiness and non-self.
- The realization that the one serving is being served.
- In order to free ourselves from these extremes, we must release our ego attachment and dissolve all dualistic concepts with the insight of supreme wisdom.
- This wisdom transforms the other five paramitas into their transcendental state as well.
- Only the illumination of supreme wisdom makes this possible.