

From *Indestructible Truth* by Reginald Ray

The Six Paramitas p. 336-337

“One fulfills one’s bodhisattva vow through acting to benefit beings. Since this kind of activity runs against the deeply engrained habitual patterns of our usual approach, practices need to be given that unlock our compassion. The most important set of bodhisattva practices are the six paramitas. *Paramita* means “transcendent action” and refers to practices that, in being directed to others, transcend ego. These also transcend ego in the sense that their energy flows ultimately from the selfless buddha-nature within. The six paramitas show us six general areas of selfless activity that, as bodhisattvas, we need to cultivate.

The paramitas need to be understood on three different levels, corresponding to ground, path, and fruition. At the level of the ground, they arise in the form of inspiration to help others. As ground, they present themselves as a kind of thirst or intense inspiration. For example, one might find in oneself a longing to express generosity to others, to give to them without reservation. At the level of path, the paramitas are specific practices that one needs to engage in. As path, they involve actions that are particularly challenging because they reverse the normal logic of ego.... At the fruition level, the paramitas are transcendent actions that are performed by fully realized ones, without the least thought or effort and with natural spontaneity. It is as if, when a situation calls for generosity, with irresistible force, generosity arises.”

Meditation (Dhyana-paramita) p.344-345

“The meditation of shamatha and vipashyana developed in the Hinayana continues to be the foundation of dharma practice in the Mahayana. One continues to develop stillness through mindfulness of breathing or other similar techniques. And this practice nourishes the maturation of vipashyana, which, in the Mahayana, is the direct perception of shunyata or emptiness.

However, as practiced in the Mahayana, meditation has a different context and a different motivation. Instead of meditating in order to benefit oneself, to create psychological comfort or protection, or to gain some other such end, now one’s primary inspiration for practice is the benefit of others.”

Profound Treasury, Volume II, Meditation, Chapter 31

“You ride on the horse of exertion with complete mindfulness and skill. You develop constant steadiness, which is like maintaining a good seat as you ride your horse.”

dyana (Sanskrit) “subdued thinking” or “mindfulness”

samten (Tibetan) *sam*= thought process or steadiness of mind *ten*=stabilized

“stabilized thought process”

King of the mountains. Stability, immovability with insight, vision.

“Samten is watching your thoughts and whatever goes on in your mind as a flowing river or mountain range.” p. 249

Solidity along with awareness of everything that is taking place.

Shamatha is not taming the mind at this point but synchronizing body, speech and mind. Free from passion.

Dyana paramita includes postmeditation and meditation experience. Composure, relaxed state.

“The practice of dhyana paramita allows you to concentrate on the virtues of nonaggression and contentment.” p. 251 Your body, speech and mind are relaxed. You can find your hermitage within yourself.

Inner hermitage very lonely. Why is this so? You don't need entertainment and distraction. "You are completely coordinated and you are in one piece. Your mind is one, and your concentration and actions are at their best." p 251

Two categories of samten:

1. Shamatha, common samten, developing concentration and mindfulness, paying heed.
2. Vipashyana, special samten, development of awareness. Present throughout your everyday life. Constant awareness brings together shamatha and vipashyana.

Three levels of samten:

1. **Dwelling in the dharma of seeing** (shamatha): "Your perception and your state of mind are working along with the *ayatanas* and *dhatas* so you are constantly projecting outward." You are maintaining yourself within the *ayatanas* so you are able to remain in the state of shamatha. Mind becomes peaceful and your body relaxed.

Shinjang=thoroughly processed. Mind and body are thoroughly trained which leads to sense of natural relaxation.

2. **Accumulating goodness** (vipashyana): you have a greater ability to discriminate dharmas (circumstances that occur; phenomena that arise). Your perceptual awareness is heightened. "...virtue can be defined as clear perception. Clear perception is not involved with ego." p. 253
You know how to help others.

3. **Enthusiasm in working for others** (combined shamatha and vipashyana): When developing shamatha, you are developing shunyata; when developing vipashyana, you are developing compassion. Joining emptiness and compassion. You can work with someone for a long time.

Eight main obstacles to samten:

1. Body not controlled
2. Speech not controlled
3. Mind not controlled
4. Indulgence in your kleshas
5. Mindless chatter, gossip
6. Let go and relax too much; sloppy
7. Heedlessness
8. Regressing in your practice

Implementing samten: how to cultivate the ideal meditative state based on egoless and compassion.

The practice of the four limitless ones: Maitri, compassion, joy, equanimity.