



Nalandabodhi Connecticut  
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"When there is grasping,  
the grasper comes into existence.  
If he did not grasp,  
Then being freed, he would not come into existence."  
- Nagarjuna, "*Mulamadhyamakakarika*"

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In this, his last of the teachings on the six paramitas, Tai Situ Rinpoche again distinguishes three aspects of the perfection of wisdom: samsaric wisdom, lesser transcendent wisdom, and the highest transcendent wisdom. The first of these refers to all the many facets of worldly wisdom such as philosophy, science, and art, and language. Within Tibet worldly wisdom was traditionally broken into five minor and five major disciplines. The minor disciplines were delineated as: poetry, astrology, terminology (grammar), dramatic art, and etymology (the study of names). The five greater disciplines are: crafts, medicine, communication, and dialectics (valid and invalid perception). Through the study of the five greater disciplines one first learns how everything is made, then how it functions, then about the interdependent nature of everything, and finally the truth about the nature of all things. When considered in this way, samsaric logic is not something to be rejected, but a necessary first step in our development of prajna.

Lower transcendent wisdom refers to a study of relative and absolute truth from an egocentric position. It refers to a morality that is based upon the ideas of good and bad and even the ultimate truth is defined as being opposite to the relative truth. All of this wisdom exists within a sphere of duality. This wisdom transcends the normal mundane reasoning of samsara, but is a reflection of the highest level of prajna.

As described by Tai Situ Rinpoche the highest level of prajna, the highest transcendent wisdom, is beyond words, imagination, or explanation. To have wisdom of how things come into being and how things work is the first stage (samsaric wisdom), to know the way things really are is the second stage (lesser transcendent wisdom), and to know that which is truly the essence of everything is the highest transcendent wisdom. This highest aspect of prajna cannot be clearly explained or described. According to Tai Situ Rinpoche this wisdom must be "tasted" by the practitioner. Only through its direct experience can we appreciate the perfection of prajna.

Those who embark on the path of the Bodhisattva practice according to the six perfections. As Tai Situ Rinpoche has taught, each perfection itself has three aspects. Those on the Bodhisattva path practice these eighteen aspects in traversing the paths of accumulation, preparation, insight, familiarization, and fulfillment. As described by Tai Situ Rinpoche, the ultimate realization of the first path becomes the relative basis for the next, and so on until we reach the fruition of Buddhahood.

In traversing the Bodhisattva path profound realization is taught to be achieved at the third stage and then grows profoundly through to the tenth stage. According to Tai Situ Rinpoche there is no growth in actual realization or understanding, but a gradual dissolution of the obstacle of subject/object duality. At the last level of the tenth stage the Bodhisattva achieves full realization of the ultimate truth itself, just as it is. This non-dual wisdom is the prajna of the Buddha. It is referred to as the "Vajra Like Wisdom", the indestructible, unobscurable wisdom.

Ultimate truth, Buddha nature, is always with us, is always there. When we clear away our obscurations through the practices of the six perfections and "taste" this wisdom for ourselves this is what is referred to as Buddhahood.

*May all beings benefit.*

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The information presented in this newsletter is based upon a teachings by Tai Situpa Rinpoche presented in the book "Way to Go." This text is out of print but excerpts related to The Six Perfections can be downloaded at the [Samye Ling](#) website.