

The Ten Perfections (Parami) by Unknown Author



Our Self-Enlightened Buddha

Introduction – I will like to share this with you, very well written Buddha’s ten perfections – Parami to become a Sammasambuddha, the teaching Buddha.

Ten Perfections- Parami

There are ten transcendental virtues, which in Pali are called “**parami**,” that every Bodhisatta practices in order to gain supreme enlightenment, **Samma-Sambuddhahood**. They are generosity (**dana**), morality (**sila**), renunciation (**nekkhamma**), wisdom (**panna**), energy (**viriya**), patience (**khanti**), truthfulness (**sacca**), determination (**adhitthana**), loving-kindness (**metta**), and equanimity (**upekkha**).

According to the **Cariya Pitaka** commentary, those virtues which are cultivated with compassion, guided by reason, uninfluenced by selfish motives, and unsullied by misbelieve and all feelings of self-conceit.

The actions of a Bodhisatta are absolutely selfless, being prompted solely by compassion towards all beings. So boundless is his love and so pervasive is his

infinite compassion, that unceasingly throughout the series of his countless lives he strives to diminish suffering, to elevate to greater honor the poor and the lowly, and to help the needy in every possible way.

He seeks no delight in self-indulgence while his less fortunate brethren and sisters are steeped in misery. To alleviate suffering he would not hesitate to sacrifice his most cherished possessions - not excepting life itself, as illustrated in the story in the [V yaghri Jataka](#).

With heart full of compassion he works for the weal and happiness of all beings, though always guided by reason. He is generously endowed with all the essential qualities of both head and heart in their full development, which are dedicated to the service of the world at large.

In serving others a Bodhisatta is not actuated by a desire for power or worldly possessions. Knowing as he does that fame comes unsought to him who is worthy of it, why should he pursue it?

He is completely altruistic in his motives and egoism plays no part in his disinterested activities.

“Let laymen and monks both think that this was done by me. In every work great or small, let them refer to me. Such is the aspiration of the fool. His desires and pride increase,” states the Dhammapada (v.74). Such narrow and selfish aspirations do not enter into the mind of a Bodhisatta.

[Dana or Generosity](#)

Dana or generosity is the first Parami. It confers upon the giver the double blessing of inhibiting immoral thoughts of selfishness, while developing pure thoughts of selflessness. “It blessed him that gives and him that takes.”

A Bodhisatta is not concerned as to whether the recipient is truly in need or not, for his one object in practicing generosity, as he does, is to eliminate craving that lies dormant within himself. The joy of service, its attendant happiness, and the alleviation of suffering are other blessings of generosity.

In extending his love with supernormal generosity, he makes no distinction between one being and another, but he uses judicious discrimination in this generosity. If, for instance, a drunkard were to seek his help, and, if he were convinced that the drunkard would misuse his gift, the Bodhisatta without hesitation would refuse it, for such misplaced generosity would not constitute a Parami. Should anyone seek his help for a worthy purpose, then instead of assuming a forced air of dignity or making false pretensions, he would simply express his deep obligation for the opportunity afforded, and willingly and humbly render every possible aid. Yet he would never set it down to his own credit as a favor conferred upon another, nor

would he ever regard the man as his debtor for the service rendered. He is interested only in the good act, but in nothing else springing from it. He expects no reward in return, nor does he even crave enhancement of reputation from it.

A Bodhisatta, though always ready to confer a favor, seldom, if ever, stoops to ask one. The **Brahmadattha Jataka** (No.323) relates that once the Bodhisatta was leading an ascetic life in the park of a certain king who used to visit him daily and minister to his needs. Yet, for twelve long years he refrained from asking the boon of a pair of sandals and a leaf-parasol, trifling as they were. When questioned as to his strange but modest attitude, he replied to the king:

“Who beg, Pancala Lord, to weep are fain.

They who refuse are apt to weep again.”

In abundance he gives to others, irrespective of caste, creed, or color, though seeking nothing for himself in return. A characteristic of his mind is perfect contentment such as the poet Edward Dyer contemplated:

- *“Some have too much, Yet still do crave,*
- *I little have and seek no more,*
- *They are but poor though much they have,*
- *And I am rich with little store.”*

In the **Kanha Jataka** (No.440) it is related that Sakka, attracted by the exemplary, virtuous life of the Bodhisatta, approached him and offered him a boon. According to Sakka’s kindly request, he wished for the following:

1. *May I harbor no malice or hatred against my neighbor!*
2. *May I not covet my neighbor’s possessions!*
3. *May I cherish no personal affection towards others!*
4. *May I possess equanimity!*

Greatly disappointed, though full of admiration for the disinterest shown, Sakka entreated him to choose yet another boon. He replied:

*“Where in the woods I ever dwell,
Where all alone dwell I,
Grant no disease may mar my peace, or break my ecstasy.”
Hearing this, Sakka thought,*

“Wise Kanha, in choosing a boon, chooses nothing connected with food. All he chooses pertain to the ascetic life.”

Yet again Sakka said,

*“Choose a boon!” The Bodhisatta responded:
“O Sakka, Lord of the world, a choice thou doest declare:
No creature be aught harmed for me, O Sakka, anywhere,
Neither in body nor in mind, is this, Sakka, my prayer.”*

A Bodhisatta exercises this virtue of generosity to such an extent that he is prepared to give away not only wealth and other cherished possessions, but also his kingdom, his limbs and even his children and wife; and he is ever ready to sacrifice his own life wherever such sacrifice would benefit humanity.

The Nevari (Nepalese) version of this interesting and pitiful story is as follow:

In the remote past there lived a devout and powerful king named Maharattha. He had three sons by the name of *Maha Prashada*, *Maha Deva*, and *Mahasattva*, all good and obedient. One bright day, the king accompanied by the princess and attendants went on an excursion to a forest's park. The young prince's, admiring the enchanting beauty of the flowers and trees, gradually penetrated far into the thick forest

The attendants noticed their absence and reported the matter to the king. He ordered his ministers to go in search of them and returned to his palace. The three princes, wandering through the forest, reached a mountain's top. From there, the eldest saw a starving tigress with five cubs almost on the verge of death. For seven days since her delivery, she had been without food. The cubs approached the mother to suck milk, but she had nothing to satisfy their hunger, and the tigress, driven by starvation, was very clearly at this point of unnaturally devouring her own cubs. The eldest brother was the first to see this pathetic spectacle. He showed the tigress to his brothers and said, "Behold that pitiful sight, O brothers! The starving tigress is about to devour her cubs. How wretched is their condition!" "What is their staple food, brother?" inquired Mahasatta. "Flesh and blood is the staple food of tigers and lions," replied Maha Prashada. "The tigress seems to be very weak. Evidently she is without food for some days. How noble if one could sacrifice one's body for their sake! "But, who is willing to make such a great sacrifice!" remarked Maha Deva. "Surely, no one would be able to do so," stated Maha Prashada. "I lack intelligence. Ignorant persons like us would not be able to sacrifice their bodies for the sake of another. But there may be selfless men of boundless compassion who would willingly do so," said Mahasattva in a merciful tone. Thus they discussed among themselves and casting a last glance at the helpless tigress, they departed. Mahasattva thought to himself. "Sacrifice I must this fleeting body for the sake of this starving tigress. Foul is this body, and is subject to decay and death. One may adorn and perfume it, but soon it will stink and perish." Reflecting thus, he requested his brothers to proceed as he would be retiring to the forest for some reason or other. He retracted his steps to the place where the tigress was resting. Hanging his garments and ornaments on a tree again he thought: "Work I must for the weal of others. Compassionate we must be

towards all beings. To serve those who need our succor is our paramount duty. This foul body of mine will I sacrifice and thus save the tigress and her five cubs.

By this meritorious act may I gain Samma Sambuddhahood and save all beings from the ocean of Samsara! May all being be well and happy!

Moved by compassion and inspired by the spirit of selfless service, dauntlessly he jumped of the precipice towards the tigress. The fall did not result in an instantaneous death. The tigress, though ruthless by nature, pitied the Bodhisattva and would not even touch his body. The Bodhisattva thought otherwise: "Obviously the poor animal is too weak to devour me!" So he went in search of a weapon. He came across a bamboo splinter, and drawing near the tigress. He cut of his neck and fell dead on the ground in a pool of blood. The hungry tigress greedily drank the blood and devoured the flesh leaving mere bones. The story adds that at the moment the Bodhisattva sacrificed his body, the earth quaked, the waters of the ocean were disturbed, the sun's rays dimmed, eyesight was temporarily blurred. *Devas gave cries of Sadhu, and Parijata flowers came down as rain from heaven.* Affected by the earthquake, the two elder brothers rightly guessed that their younger brother must have become a prey to the tigress. "Surely, Mahasattva must have sacrificed his life for he spoke in a very merciful tone" said Maha Deva. Both of them turned back and went to the spot. They were horrified and awe-struck at the unexpected spectacle. What they saw was not their beloved brother but a mass of bones besmeared with blood. On a tree close by, they saw the hanging garments. They wept and fainted and on regaining consciousness, they returned home with a heavy heart. On the very day the Bodhisattva sacrificed his life, the queen's mother dreamt that she was dead, that her teeth had fallen out, and that she experienced pain as if her body were cut by a sharp weapon. Furthermore, she dreamt that a hawk come swooping down and carried of the three beautiful pigeons that were perched on the roof. The queen was frightened, and on walking she remembered that her princes had gone for an airing in the forest. She hastened to the king and related the inauspicious dreams. On being informed that the princes were missing, she entreated the king to sent messengers in search of them. Some ministers who had gone earlier to search for them returned to the palace with the sad news of the lamentable death of the youngest prince. Hearing it, nobody was able to refrain from weeping. The king, however, comforted the queen and mounting an elephant, speedily proceeded to the forest with his attendants and brought back the other two grieving sons. So great was their grief that at first they were speechless. Later summoning up courage, they explained to their bereaved mother the heroic deed of their noble brother. Soon the order was given by the king to make necessary arrangements for them all to visit the memorable scene of the incident.

All reached the spot in due course. At the mere sight of the blood-smeared bones of their dearest son scattered here and there, both the king and queen fainted. The *Purohita Brahmin* instantly poured sandalwood water over them, and they regained consciousness. Thereupon the king ordered his ministers to gather all the hair,

bones and garments, and heaping them together, worshipped them. Advising them to erect a golden Cetiya enshrining the relics, with a grieving heart, he departed to his palace. The Cetiya was afterwards named " *Om Namō Buddha*." At the end of the Jataka, it is stated that the Cetiya is at present called "**Namura**." In spite of differences in the two versions, the central point in both is the self-sacrifice of the Bodhisatta. It is immaterial whether the Bodhisatta sacrificed his life as an ascetic or as a prince. As in the other Jatakas, the nidana or the occasion for the Jataka appears in this one too. But the identification of the personages found at the end of Jatakas is absent here. The Nevari Jataka is obviously more descriptive than the Sanskrit version. The origin of the Navari is uncertain.

Dealing with the Bodhisatta's mode of practicing Dana, an interesting account appears in an important text of the Cariya Pitaka commentary. In giving food the Bodhisatta intends thereby to endow the recipient with long life, beauty, happiness, strength, wisdom, and the highest fruit, Nibbana. He gives thirsty beings to drink with the object of quenching the thirst of passion; garments to acquire moral shame and moral dread; conveyances to cultivate psychic powers; odors for the scent of Sila (morality); garlands and unguents to gain the glory pertaining to the Buddha's virtues; seats to win the seat of enlightenment; lodging with the hope of serving as a refuge to the world; lights to obtain **the five kinds of eyes**—namely, **the physical eye, the eye of wisdom, the divine eye, the Buddha eye, and the eye of omniscience**; forms to possess the Buddha aura; sounds to cultivate a voice as sweet as Brahma's; tastes so that he may be pleasing to all; contacts to gain of deathlessness (Nibbana). He emancipates slaves in order to deliver men from the thralldom of passions; renounces children to develop the paternal feeling toward all; renounces wives to become the master of the world; renounces kingdoms to inherit the kingdom of righteousness. Besides revealing the altruistic attitude of a Bodhisatta, these lofty aspirations disclose his disinterested efforts for the amelioration of mankind.

Sila

Combines with this supernormal generosity of a Bodhisatta, is his virtuous conduct (sila). The meaning of the Pali term is discipline. It consists of duties that one should perform (caritta) and abstinences which one should practice (varitta). These duties towards parents, children, husband, wife, teachers, pupils, friends, monks, subordinates, etc. are described in detail in the *Sigalovada Sutta*. The duties of a layman are described in a series of relationships, each for mnemonic reasons of five items:

1. A child should minister to his parents by:

- (i) supporting them,*
- (ii) doing their duties,*
- (iii) keeping the family lineage,*
- (iv) acting in such a way as to worthy of his inheritance and furthermore,*

(v) *offering alms in honor of his departed relatives*

2. Parents, who are thus ministered to by their children, should:

- (i) *dissuade them from evil,*
- (ii) *persuade them to do good,*
- (iii) *teach them an art, (iv) give them in marriage to a suitable wife, and*
- (iv) *hand over to them their inheritance at the proper time.*

3. A pupil should minister to a teacher by:

- (i) *rising,*
- (ii) *attending on him,*
- (iii) *attentive hearing,*
- (iv) *personal service, and*
- (v) *respectfully receiving instruction.*

4. Teachers thus ministered to by pupils should:

- (i) *train them in the best discipline,*
- (ii) *make them receive that which is well held by them,*
- (iii) *teach them every suitable art and science,*
- (iv) *introduce them, to their friends and associates, and*
- (v) *provide for their safety in every quarter.*

5. A husband should minister to his wife by:

- (i) *courtesy,*
- (ii) *not despising her,*
- (iii) *faithfulness,*
- (iv) *handing over authority to her, and*
- (v) *providing her with ornaments.*

6. The wife, who is thus ministered to by her husband should:

- (i) *perform her duties in perfect order,*
- (ii) *be hospitable to the people around,*
- (iii) *be faithful,*
- (iv) *protect what he brings, and*
- (v) *be industrious and not lazy in discharging her duties.*

7. A noble scion should minister to his friends and associates by:

- (i) *generosity,*
- (ii) *courteous speech,*
- (iii) *promoting their good,*

(iv) *equality, and, (v) truthfulness.*

8. Friends and associated, who are thus ministered to by a noble scion, should:

- (i) *protect him when he is heedless,*
- (ii) *(ii) protect his property when he is heedless,*
- (iii) *become a refuge when he is afraid,*
- (iv) *not forsake him when in danger, and*
- (v) *be considerate towards his progeny.*

9. A master should minister to servants and employees by:

- (i) *assigning them work according to their strength,*
- (ii) *supplying them with food and wages,*
- (iii) *tending them in sickness,*
- (iv) *sharing with them extraordinary delicacies, and*
- (v) *relieving them at times.*

10. The servants and employees, who are thus ministered to by their master should,

- (i) *rise before him,*
- (ii) *go to sleep after him,*
- (iii) *take only what is given,*
- (iv) *perform their duties satisfactorily, and*
- (v) *spread his good name and fame.*

11. A noble scion should minister to ascetics and brahmins by:

- (i) *lovable deeds,*
- (ii) *lovable words,*
- (iii) *lovable thoughts,*
- (iv) *not closing the doors against them, and*
- (v) *supplying their material needs.*

12. The ascetics and brahmins who are thus ministered by a noble scion should;

- (i) *dissuade him from evil,*
- (ii) *persuade him to do good,*
- (iii) *love him with a kind heart,*
- (iv) *make him hear what he has not heard clarity what he has already heard,*
and
- (v) *point out the path to a heavenly state.*

A Bodhisatta who fulfills all household duties (caritta sila) becomes truly a refined gentleman in the strictest sense of the term. Apart from these obligatory duties, he endeavors his best to observe the other rules relating to varitta sila (morality) and thus lead an ideal Buddhist life. Rightly discerning the law of action and reaction of his own accord, he refrains from evil and does well to the best of his ability. He considers it his duty to be a blessing to him and others, and not a curse to any, whether man or animal.

Knowing that life is precious to all and as no man has the right to take away the life of another, he extends his compassion and loving-kindness towards every living being. Even to the tiniest creature that crawls at his feet, and refrains from killing or causing injury to any living creature. It is the animal instinct in man that prompted him mercilessly to kill the weak and feast on their flesh. Whether to appease one's appetite or as a pastime, it is not justifiable to kill or cause a helpless animal to be killed an animal, what must be said of slaying human beings, however, noble the motive may at first sight appear. Furthermore, a Bodhisatta abstains from all forms of stealing, direct or indirect, and thus develops honesty, trustworthiness and uprightness. Abstaining from misconduct, which debases the exalted nature of man, he tries to be pure and chaste in his sex life. He avoids false speech, harsh language, slander, and frivolous talk and utters only words, which are true, sweet, peaceable and helpful. He avoids intoxicating liquors, which tend to mental distraction and confusion, and cultivates heedfulness and clarity of vision.

A Bodhisatta would adhere to these five principles which tend to control deeds and word, whether against his own interests or not. On a proper occasion, he will sacrifice not only possessions and wealth even life itself for the sake of his principles.

It should not be understood that a Bodhisatta is perfect in his dealings in the course of his wanderings in Samsara. Being a worldling, he has his own failings and limitations. Certain Jatakas like the Knavera Jataka (No.318) depict him as a very desperate highway robber. This however, is the exception rather than the rule.

The great importance attached by an aspirant to Buddhahood to morality is evident from the *Silavimamsa Jataka* (No.362) where the Bodhisatta says: "Apart from virtue wisdom has no worth".

In praise of **Sila** (morality), the foundation of all other higher virtues, Venerable Buddhaghosa writes in the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 24):

*"What scent else blows with and against the wind?
What stairway leads like her to heaven's gate?
What door into Nibbana's city opens?
The sage whose virtue is his ornament
Outshines the pomp and pearls of jeweled kings;
In virtuous men virtue destroys self-blame,
Begetting joy and praise.
Thus should be known
The sun of all the discourse on the power
Of virtue, root of merits, slayer of faults,"*

Nekkhamma

Still keener is the enthusiasm a Bodhisatta exhibits towards Nekkhamma (renunciation), for by nature he is a lover of solitude. Nekkhamma implies both renunciation of worldly pleasures by adopting the ascetic life and the temporary inhibition of hindrances (nivarana) by Jhanas (ecstasies). A Bodhisatta is neither selfish nor self-possessive but is selfless in his activities. He is even ready to sacrifice this happiness for the sake of others. Though he may sit in the lap of luxury, immersed in worldly pleasures, he may comprehend then transitorizes and the value of renunciation. Realizing thus the vanity of fleeting material pleasures, he voluntarily leaves his earthly possessions, and donning the simple ascetic garb, tries to lead the holy life in all its purity. Here he practically selfless in all his actions. No inducement whether fame, wealth, honor, or worldly gain, could induce him to do anything contrary to his principles. Sometimes, the first grey hair, as in the case of the Makhadeva Jataka (No.9), is alone a sufficient call to a Bodhisatta to abandon the uncongenial atmosphere of the palace for the independent solitary life of a hermit. At time, a dewdrop or withered leaf may induce him to adopt the ascetic life.

The practice of renunciation not always observed by a Bodhisatta; however. In the [Kusa Jataka](#) (No.531), for instance, the Bodhisatta was subjected to much humiliation owing to his unrestrained desire to win the hand of the beautiful princes [Pabhavati](#).

Again in the Darimukha Jataka (No.376), it is mentioned that a Pacceka Buddha, quondam friend of the Bodhisatta, approached him and said: "Pleasures of sense are but morass and mire, The triply-rooted terror them I call Vapor and dust I have proclaimed them, Sire, Become a brother and forsake them all." He promptly replied:

*"Infatuate, bound and deeply stained am I,
Brahmin, with pleasures, fearful they may be.
But I love life, and cannot them deny:
Good works I undertake continually."*

In the period of a [Buddhaless cycle](#), a Bodhisatta would adopt the life of an ascetic and lead the holy celibate life in solitude. If born in a Buddha cycle, he would lead the life of a Bhikkhu in strict accordance with the rules that pertain thereto. An ideal Bhikkhu who lead an exemplary life is a blessing to himself and others. He teaches both by example and by precept. Within he is pure, without he purifies. He is very strenuous in working for his inner spiritual development, catering at the same time for the spiritual needs of those lesser brethren and sisters. He is no burden to society because he gives no trouble to any. He is like is his wealth. He repents not for the past, nor is he worried about the future. He lives in the present,

free from all responsibilities and trammels of the world. He is ready to wander wherever he chooses, for the food and happiness of others, without the bee that extracts honey from the flower without damaging it. He possesses no property, for he has renounced everything worldly. His needs are few, and contentment clinging to any abode. Under all vicissitudes of life, he maintains a balanced mind. His free services are always at the disposal of others. Non-Buddhist ascetics are invariably called Paribbjakas, Ajivakas, Sanyasins, etc. Bhikkhu (Sanskrit, Bhikkhu) has now become exclusively Buddhist. The rules laid down for a Bhikkhu, do not permit him to beg for anything from another. He may accept the four requisites- robes, alms, lodging, and medicine that presented to him. If in need of any requisite, he is allowed to ask it from his parents, close relatives, or from professed supporters. A Bhikkhu is not bound to life-long vows. Of his own accord, he enters the order in order to lead the holy life until he chooses to leave it. Once he dons the yellow robe the emblem of Arahants, he is bound to observe the rules that pertain thereto. To lead a life of perfect purity and selfless service, to control and purify the mind with ease, to see things as they truly are, to think rightly and deeply, to develop the higher nature of man, to appreciate fully the higher spiritual values, no other mode of life affords such facilities and such great opportunities as the life of a Bhikkhu. A Bhikkhu may lead either a contemplative or a studious life. The former is more in harmony with the ideal of a Bhikkhu, for the ultimate object in donning the yellow robe, the emblem of sanctity and humility, is to eradicate passions and realize Nibbana.

Panna

Nekkhamma is followed by panna (wisdom or knowledge). It is the right understanding of the nature of the world in the light of impermanent nature (anicca), sorrowfulness (dukkha) and soullessness (anatta). A Bodhisatta meditates on these three characteristics, but not to such an extent as to attain Arahantship, for to do this would be deviating from his goal. At the same time, he does not disparage worldly wisdom. He tries to acquire knowledge even from his servants. Never does he show any desire to display his knowledge, nor is he ashamed to plead ignorance even in public, for under no circumstances does he ever prove to be a charlatan. What he knows is always at the disposal of others, and that he imparts to them unreservedly. He tries his best to lead other from darkness to light. Knowledge is of three kinds. The first is knowledge acquired orally (sutamaya panna).

In the ancient days when printing was not in vogue, *knowledge was acquired by hearing*: hence a learned man was then called bahussuta (= he who has heard much), corresponding to English "erudition."

The second kind of knowledge is acquired by thought (cintamaya panna). The practical scientific knowledge of the west is the direct outcome of this kind of knowledge.

The third is a superior kind of knowledge acquired by meditation and contemplation (bhavanamaya panna). It is by such meditation that one realizes intuitive truths, which are beyond logical reasoning. The practice of Bhavana or meditation is not a passive reverie, but an energetic striving. It leads to self-elevation, self-discipline, self-control, and self-illumination. It is a heart tonic as well. Wisdom is the apex of Buddhism. It is the first factor in the Noble Eightfold Path (samma ditthi). It is one of the seven factors of enlightenment (dhamma vicaya sambjjhanga). It is one of the four means of accomplishment (vimansa iddhipada). It is one of the five powers, (pannabala) and one of the five controlling faculties (pannindriya). It is wisdom that leads to purification and to final deliverance.

Viriya

Closely allied with panna(wisdom) is viriya (energy or perseverance). Here viriya does not mean physical strength though this is an asset, but mental vigor or strength of character, which is far superior. It is defined as the persistent effort to work for the welfare of others, both in thought and deed. Firmly establishing himself in this virtue, the Bodhisatta develops self-reliance and makes it one of his prominent characteristics.

In the words of Dr. Tagore, a Bodhisatta relying on his own resources would form his mind thus:

*"Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers,
but to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain,
but for the heart to conquer it.
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved,
But hope for the patience to win my freedom."*

The viriya of a Bodhisatta is clearly depicted in the [Mahajanaka Jataka](#) (No. 539). Shipwrecked in the open sea for seven days; he struggled on without once giving up hope until he was finally rescued. Failures he views as steps to success, opposition causes him to double his exertion, and dangers increase his courage. Cutting his way through difficulties, which impair the enthusiasm of the feeble, surmounting obstacles, which dishearten the ordinary, he looks straight towards his goal. Nor does he ever stop until his goal is reached. To Mara who advised the Bodhisatta to abandon his quest, he said,

"Death in battle with passions to me seems more honorable than a life of defeat."

Just as his wisdom is always directed to the service of others, so also is his fund of energy. Instead of confining it to the narrow course leading to the realization of personal ends, he directs it into the open channel of activities that tend to universal happiness. Ceaselessly and untiringly he works for others, expecting no

remuneration in return, or reward. He is ever ready to serve others to the best of his ability. In certain respects, viriya plays an even greater part than panna in the achievement of the goal. In one who treads the Noble Eightfold Path, right effort (*samma vayama* or *viriya*) suppresses the arising of evil states, eradicates those which have arisen, stimulates good states, and perfects those good states which have already arisen. It serves as one of the seven factors of enlightenment (*viriyiddhipada*). It is *viriya* that performs nine functions. It is effort coupled with wisdom that serves as a powerful hand to achieve all ends.

Khanti

As important as *Viriya* is *Khanti*. It is the patient endurance of suffering inflicted upon oneself by others, and the forbearance of others' wrongs. A Bodhisatta practices patience to such an extent that he is not provoked even when his hands and feet are cut off. In the *Khantivadi Jataka* (No.313), it appears that not only did the Bodhisatta cheerfully endure the torture inflicted by the drunkard king, who mercilessly ordered his hands and feet, nose and ears to be cut off, but requited those injuries with a blessing. Lying on the ground, in a deep pool of his own blood, with mutilated limbs, the Bodhisatta said, "Long live the king, whose cruel hand my body thus has marred. Pure souls like mine such deeds as these with anger ne'er regard." Of his forbearance it is said that whenever he is harmed, he thinks of the aggressor:

"This person is a fellow-being of mine. Intentionally or unintentionally I myself must have been the source of provocation, or it may be due to a past evil kamma of mine. As it is the outcome of my own action, why should I harbor ill-will towards him?"

It may be mentioned that a Bodhisatta is not irritated by any man's shameless conduct either. Admonishing his disciples to practice forbearance, the Buddha says in the *Kakacupana Sutta*: "Though robbers, who are highway men, should sever your limbs with a two handled saw, yet if you thereby defile your mind, you would be no follower of my teaching". "Thus should you train yourselves: 'Unsullied shall our hearts remain. No evil word shall escape our lips. Kind and compassionate, with loving-heart, harboring no ill will shall we abide, enfolding even these bandits with thoughts of loving-kindness. And forth from them proceeding, we shall abide, radiating the whole world with thoughts of loving-kindness, vast, expansive, measureless, benevolent and unified.'" Practising patience and tolerance, instead of seeing the ugliness in others, a Bodhisatta tries to seek the good and beautiful in all.

Sacca

Truthfulness or *sacca* is the seventh perfection. By *sacca* is here meant the fulfillment of one's promise. This is one of the salient characteristics of a Bodhisatta, for he is no breaker of his word. He acts as he speaks, he speaks as he acts. According to the *Harita Jataka* (No.431) a Bodhisatta, in the course of his life's

wandering, never utters an untruth although at times he may violate the other four precepts. Truth he hides not event to be polite. He makes truth his guide, and holds it his bounden duty to keep to his word. He ponders well before he makes his promise, but once made the promise is fulfilled at any cost, even that of his life. In the Hiri Jataka (No.363) the Bodhisatta advises: "Be thou in deed to every promise true, Refuse to promise what thou can not do; Wise men on empty braggarts look askew." Again, the Maha Sutasoma Jataka (No.537) recounts that to fulfill a promise the Bodhisatta was prepared even to sacrifice his life. "Just as the morning star on high In balanced course doth ever keep, And through all seasons, times, and years,

*Doth never from its pathway swerve,
So likewise he in all wise speech
Swerves never from the path of truth.
" A Bodhisatta is trustworthy, sincere, and honest.
What he thinks, he speaks.
There is perfect harmony in his thoughts, words and deeds.
He is consistent and straightforward in all his dealings.
He is no hypocrite since he strictly adheres to his high principles.
There is no difference between his inner self and his outward utterance.
His private life accords with his public life.
Even the truth he does not always utter.
Should such utterance not be conducive to the good and happiness of others, then he remains silent.
If any truth seems beneficial to others, he utters it
However, detrimental to himself it may be.
And he honours the word of others as he honours his own.*

Adhitthana

Truthfulness is followed by adhitthana, which may be translated as resolute determination. Without this firm determination the other perfections, cannot be fulfilled. It is compared to the foundation of a building. This will power force all obstructions out of the Bodhisatta's path, and no matter what may come to him, sickness, grief, or disaster; he never turns his eyes away from his goal. For instance, the Bodhisatta Gotama made a firm determination to renounce his royal pleasures and gain enlightenment. For six long years, his was a superhuman struggle. He had to endure manifold hardships and face innumerable difficulties. At a crucial moment when he most needed their help, his five favorite disciples deserted him. Yet, he did not give up his effort. His enthusiasm was redoubled. He strove on alone and eventually achieved the goal. "Just as a rocky mountain peak, Unmoved stands, firm established, Unshaken by the boisterous gale, And always in its place abides, So likewise thou must ever be In Resolution firm entrenched." A Bodhisatta is a man of iron determination, whose high principles cannot be shaken. Easily persuaded to do good, none could tempt him to do anything contrary to those principles. As occasion demands, he is as soft as a flower and as firm as a rock.

Metta

The most important of all Paramis is metta (Sanskrit Maitri). There is no graceful English equivalent for metta. It may be rendered as benevolence, goodwill, friendliness, or loving-kindness, and is defined as the wish for the happiness of all beings without exception. It is this metta that prompts a Bodhisatta to renounce personal deliverance for the sake of others. He is permeated with boundless goodwill toward all beings irrespective of caste, creed, color, or sex. Since he is the embodiment of universal love, he fears none nor is he feared by any. Wild beasts in lonely jungles are his loving friends. His very presence amongst them fosters their mutual friendliness. He ever cherishes in his heart boundless goodwill toward all that lives. Metta, in Buddhism, should be differentiated from personal affection or ordinary carnal love. From affection come fear and grief, but not from metta. In exercising this loving-kindness, one should not ignore oneself. Metta should be extended towards oneself equally with others. Metta of a Buddhist embrace the whole world, including himself. In the [Maha-Dhammapala Jataka](#) (No. 385), it appears that the young Bodhisatta extended his loving-kindness, in equal measure, towards his cruel father who ordered him to be tortured and killed the wicked executioner, his loving, weeping mother, and his humble self.

Loving-kindness possesses a mystic power, which can easily influence beings far and near. A pure heart that radiates this beneficent force is capable of transforming wild beasts into tame ones, murderers into saints.

This mystic power lies within the reach of all. Only a slight exertion is necessary to make it our own. "Dwelling on the mountain slopes," says the Buddha, "I drew to me lions and tigers, by the power of loving-kindness. Surrounded by lions and tigers, by panthers and buffaloes, by antelopes, stags and boar, I dwelt in the forest. No creature was terrified of me, and neither was I afraid of any creature. The power of loving-kindness was my support. Thus I dwelt upon the mountain's side. As one loves other, so one loved by them. No opposing forces, no hostile vibrations, and no negative thoughts can affect one who is so protected by this aura of loving-kindness. With mind at peace, he will live in a heaven of his own creation. Even those who contact him will also experience that bliss. When one habitually feels loving-kindness and demonstrates it in words and deeds, watertight compartments dissolve away. Distinctions gradually disappear, and the "I" is absorbed in the "all". Nay, there will be no "I" at all. Finally, one will be able to identify oneself with all, the culmination of metta. A Bodhisatta extends this metta towards every living being and identifies himself with all, making no distinction whatsoever of caste, creed, color, or sex. It is this Buddhist metta that attempts to break all the barriers, which separate one from another. To a Bodhisatta, there is no far and near, no enemy or foreigner, no renegade or untouchable, since universal love, realized through understanding, has established the brotherhood of all living beings. A Bodhisatta is a true citizen of the world, ever kind, friendly and compassionate.

Upekkha

The tenth Parami is upekkha or equanimity. The Pali term upekkha is composed of upa, which means justly, impartially or rightly (yuttito) and ikkha, to see, discern, or view. The etymological meaning of the term is discerning rightly, viewing justly, or looking impartially, that is without attachment or aversion, without favor or disfavor. Here the term is not used in the sense of indifference or neutral feeling. The most difficult and the most essential of all perfection is this equanimity, especially for a layman who has to live in an ill-balanced world with fluctuating fortunes.

Slights and insults are the common lot of humanity.

So are praise and blame, loss and gain, pain and happiness.\

Amidst all such vicissitudes of life, a Bodhisatta tries to stand unmoved like a firm rock, exercising perfect equanimity.

In times of happiness and adversity, amidst praise and blame, he is even-balanced.

Like a lion that does not tremble at any sound, he is not perturbed by the poisoned darts of uncurbed tongues.

Like the wind that does not cling to the meshes of a net, he is not attached to the illusory pleasures of this changing world.

Like a lotus that is unsoiled by the mud from which it springs, he lives unaffected by worldly temptations, ever calm, serene and peaceful.

"As no waves break the calm of ocean's depths, unruffled should his mind be

Furthermore, a Bodhisatta who practices upekkha metes out justice to all without being influenced by desire (chanda), hatred (dosa), fear (bhaya) and ignorance (moha).

It will be seen from the above perfections that Bodhisattahood is, in its entirety, a course of self-sacrifice, discipline, renunciation, deep insight, energy, forbearance, truthfulness, determination, boundless love, and perfect mental equilibrium.

* * * * *

In addition to these ten Paramis a Bodhisatta has to practice three modes of conducts (cariya-namely, buddhi cariya, doing good with wisdom, not ignoring self-development, nayattha cariya, working for the betterment of relatives, and natyattha cariya, working for the amelioration of the whole world. By the second mode of conduct, has not meant nepotism, but work to promote the well being of

one's kinsfolk without any favoritism. Thus practicing the ten Paramis to the highest pitch of perfection, while developing the three modes of conduct, he traverses the tempest tossed sea of Samsara, driven hither and thither by the irresistible force of kamma, manifesting himself at different times in multi-various births.

Now he comes into being as a mighty Sakka, or as a radiant Deva, at another time as a human being, high or low, again as an animal and so on until finally he seeks birth in the Tusita Heaven, having consummated the Paramis. There he abides, waiting for the opportune moment to appear on earth as a Samma Sambuddha.

It is not correct to think that a Bodhisatta purposely manifests himself in such various forms in order to acquire universal experience. No person is exempt from the inexorable law of kamma, which alone determines the future birth of individual, except Arahants and Buddhas who have put an end to all life in a fresh existence. Due to his intrinsic merit, a Bodhisatta, however, possesses some special powers. If for instance, he is born in a Brahma realm, where the span of life extends for countless aeons, by exercise of his will-power, he ceases to live in that sphere, and is reborn in another congenial place where he may serve the world and practice Paramis. Apart from his kind of voluntary death, the Jataka Commentary states that there are eighteen states in which a Bodhisatta, and the result of his potential kammic force accumulated in the course of his wandering in Samsara, is never reborn.

For instance, he is never born blind or deaf, nor does he become an absolute misbeliever who denies kamma and its effects. He is born in the animal kingdom but not larger than an elephant or smaller than a snipe. He may suffer in the ordinary states of misery, but is never destined to the nethermost stated of woe. Also a Bodhisatta does not seek birth in the [pure abodes \(suddhavasa\)](#), where [Anagamis are reborn](#), nor in the formless realms where one is deprived of the opportunity to be of service to others. It might be asked: Is a Bodhisatta aware that he is aspiring to Buddhahood in the course of his births? Sometimes he is, and at times he is not. According to certain Jatakas, it appears that on some occasions the Bodhisatta Gotama was fully conscious of his striving for Buddhahood. [Visayha Setthi Jataka](#) (No. 340) may be cited as an example.

In this particular story, Sakka questioned the Bodhisatta of his exceptional generosity. He replied that it was not for the sake of any worldly power, but for the sole purpose of attaining supreme Buddhahood. In certain births, as in the case of Jotipala, he was not only unaware of his high aspiration, but also abused the noble teacher Buddha Kassapa at the mere utterance of the sacred word – [Buddha](#). It may be mentioned that it was from this very Buddha that he obtained his last revelation. We ourselves may be Bodhisatta who have dedicated our lives to the noble purpose of serving the world. One need not think that the Bodhisatta ideal is reserved only for supermen. What one has done another can do, given the necessary effort and enthusiasm. Let us too endeavor to work disinterestedly for the good of ourselves and all others having for our object in life- the noble ideal of service and perfection.

Serve to be perfect; be perfect to serve.