

The Perfections – Wisdom Reflections and Practices

These reflections and the practices can be enriched by discussing them with friends, fellow practitioners, strangers, and if you have chosen to have one, with your Dharma Practice Day buddy.

A useful way of engaging with the reflections is to spend a few days with each one, perhaps rereading the reflection to see what new perspectives repeated readings provide. It can be nice to devote some quiet time to focus on these reflections, perhaps while going for a walk or drinking tea.

Suggested readings: my article, “The Perfection of Wisdom” in *The Issue at Hand*.

Reflections:

1. Asking questions is an important foundation of wisdom. Please spend some time coming up with questions about your Buddhist, Spiritual, or mindfulness life. Over 4-5 days write down as many of these questions as possible. Then spend a couple days narrowing the list to the 5 questions that seem most important to you. Finally spend a day considering what might be your single most important question.
2. Think about who are the wisest people you know. What makes them wise? What qualities of wisdom do you admire in them? How do they behave that manifests wisdom? Under what circumstances do you have access to wisdom? Under what circumstances do you have access to some of the same qualities as the wise people you know?
3. What is wisdom for you? How is it different from knowledge? How do you think a person acquires wisdom? What facilitates access to wisdom? Please find someone you can have a discussion about these questions.

Practices:

1. Buddhist Wisdom is sometimes called Discriminating Wisdom when it helps us see more clearly the details of our experiences and the choices that we have. In your meditation look more carefully at your experience and see if you can make more distinctions with what is happening. Instead of following your breath look more carefully to notice the details of the breathing. Notice the mood or state you are in and distinguish the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of the mood. If something is uncomfortable, take an interest in looking at the distinct aspects of what is happening. Then, as you make finer distinctions, notice how this might translate to a wiser understanding of what is happening.
2. The intentions we have for our Buddhist practice are supported by wisdom when our discernment shows us how to best follow through on those intentions. During some sessions of meditation and in some daily life situations set your intention to become more calm and peaceful. With that as a reference point, try to avoid doing the things that make you less calm and, instead, do the things that help you become increasingly calm. Afterward reflect on how having this intention helped you to be more discerning and wise.
3. Read a passage from a Dharma book a few times through the day. After reading it, reflect on what you have read. Each time consider anew how the teachings of the passage can be helpful to you.

Handouts, email list for parami course, and info about interviews are found at

www.insightmeditationcenter.org/books-articles/articles/theparamis/