



Anushka is a lifelong spiritual practitioner who has done meditation in the Theravada tradition for 20 years in monasteries and meditation centers in the United States, India, and Sri Lanka. Other influences have been mystics of Christian, Hindu, Sufi and other traditions; creative arts; nature; service work; progressive social change movements. She teaches dharma in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond, and has been part of a dharma teacher training at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and Insight Meditation Society over the past 3 years.

This evening, Anushka led a discussion on the Ten Paramis (Perfections). As we approach what in many Asian cultures is the beginning of a new year, we could consider which of the perfections to focus on.

The Ten Paramis are:

1. Generosity (dana). Giving, without seeking something in return
2. Virtue (sila) or "good conduct," "ethical behavior", "morality," or "moral discipline" is an action that is an intentional effort. At the most basic level, ethical behavior is following the Five Precepts:
  1. To refrain from taking life
  2. To refrain from taking that which is not freely given (stealing)
  3. To refrain from sexual misconduct (improper sexual behavior)
  4. To refrain from lying and deceiving
  5. To refrain from intoxicants which lead to loss of mindfulness.
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma). Giving up worldly things (especially things associated with lust, craving and desires) in pursuit of the spiritual life.
4. Wisdom (panna). Being able to recognize Right View, seeing things as they are.
5. Energy, effort (viriya). Right Effort, or strenuous and sustained effort to overcome unskillful ways
6. Patience (khanti) Practice of exercising patience toward behavior or situations that might not necessarily deserve it. It is a conscious choice to actively give patience as a gift, rather than being in a state of oppression in which one feels obligated to act in such a way.

7. Truthfulness (sacca). Speaking truthfully and avoiding incorrect speech.

8 Determination (adhitthana) A "decision," "resolution," "self-determination," "will" or "resolute determination"

9. Loving Kindness (metta) Love without attachment or expectation of return.

10. Equanimity (upekkha). Bhikku Bodhi says: "The real meaning of upekkha is equanimity, not indifference in the sense of unconcern for others. As a spiritual virtue, upekkha means equanimity in the face of the fluctuations of worldly fortune. It is evenness of mind, unshakeable freedom of mind, a state of inner equipoise that cannot be upset by gain and loss, honor and dishonor, praise and blame, pleasure and pain."