

The Seven Methods for Awakening from the Dream

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Introduction

Though everyone lives seeking personal enjoyment, this body at some time will be reduced to a mere handful of ash.

Ask: "Oh, Master of the body! What is the 'True-I'?"

Knowing the definition, confines, value and responsibility of what is called the 'I', let's throw off the bridle of illusion, and proceed on the right road of true hope. As this road is the Buddhism for practice during our daily lives, I shall discuss one paramita for each of the seven days of the week. The word Paramita is Sanskrit and its meaning is to reach the other shore. That is to say, leaving the shore of birth and death which has been formed by the false dream of illusion, we go across to the 'other shore' of Reality and Nirvana. Therefore, 'the shore on the other side of the river' signifies enlightenment of the mind. The method to achieve this is precisely through these seven paramitas.

Prior to describing the seven paramitas proper, I should explain that this mountain monk's reason for bringing up this road is that it is frustrating to see the four billion people of the present world population stumbling around having lost their 'I'. Further, the fifty million people of our country have lost our national spirit from the Silla and Koryo periods; and though we must suffer from the humiliation of being a backward, underdeveloped, and powerless nation, we don't even know enough to be humiliated about it. This is because we have lost our direction. As we are a cultured people possessing a history and tradition of half ten-thousand years, which is absolutely not that of a backward country, my direct motivation for advocating these seven paramitas is in the

hope that they will promote the recovery of that original spirit.

When we refer to the 'I', actually what is it? If we live according to the standard of our physical body, and also according to the standards of materialism, food and sex, then not only while asleep are we dreaming, but even with our eyes open aren't we in a dream? And just why is this so? Because, enslaved by the environment, we have forgotten our 'True-I', and live according to a materialistic standard; we live an aberrant life dominated by the environment. How is this sort of life any different from that of an animal? We have forgotten the Mind which is our Master, because, deceived by illusory things, we have lost our 'I'. If we act with an enlightened mind, we become a completely accomplished person, and simultaneously become the teacher of gods and men. Thus, the way to consummate humanity's highest values is to awaken to the Mind and live rightly.

Those who only know the physical body as the confines of their selves are people who live enslaved by the 'small-I'. However for those who live awakened to their Mind and thus know the proper function of all material things, the whole universe and the four billions who comprise humanity are precisely like another aspect of themselves; there is no doubt about this. Since the subject which calls itself 'I' is existent, the universe as the environment, and other people as objects can be perceived. Though some people advocate that this world must have a distinct Creator, if the 'I' does not exist, then there would be neither a perceiving subject nor perceived objects, and there would thus be no universe; so this world is certainly a fabrication of our minds. Therefore everything in this world is precisely me; and we designate this 'I', the 'Great-I'.

If I ask you of what value is the 'I', you will not be able to answer easily. To give an analogy: suppose that there was a large block of pure gold the size of the mountain behind this monastery, Chogye San. While such a block of gold was under a certain individual's safekeeping, his mind would not be moved by any other wealth or fame in the world. Nevertheless if it happened

that a person could exchange his body for that mountain of pure gold, is there anyone who would do it? And even if the entire universe was to be transformed into gold, no one would exchange it for his own body. If someone recognizes that his own self has such value, shouldn't he, at all times and in all places, perform actions of commensurate value?

*However much gold there may be,
It is not my treasure.
The sages' holiness:
What does it do for me?
The bright moonlight on Chogye San-
That is the brightness of my mind.*

The sun and the moon in the sky are no different than the sun and moon in my Mind. How much is the benefit bestowed by the sun and moon upon both sentient beings and insentient things? The sun and moon are not predisposed to shine upon the mountains because they are high, nor upon the waters because they are deep, nor on flowers because they are pretty, nor on shit because it is filthy; rather, they shine with absolute impartiality on everything. Since this is the case, what does this benefit amount to? We by no means have the ability to measure such a boon. Since the sun and the moon are not apart from our minds, there would be no greater happiness than if we could all cultivate our minds and become human beings who, like the sun and moon, could shine upon all those sentient beings groping in the darkness. I hope that those of you who are listening to this Dharma-Lecture will become people like the sun and moon; this is certainly my solemn responsibility.

Dana-Paramita : The Day of Giving (Monday)

Let us have all-pervading love not only for people but for all sentient beings, and give our possessions freely and without regret with a heart of loving-kindness. There are the following three ways of giving. First is giving through understanding the Dharma. Give your heart to the service of everyone, realizing for

the sake of others, the voidness of your own self and your desires. Second, is giving all material things without reluctance. If we give with attachment, it is merit stained by the Outflows (and thus limited in effect), but if we give without attachment it is merit unstained by the outflows (and thus of unlimited value). Let us give readily and without reluctance in the same way as we find it easy to give away cold water or a dirty mop. Third is giving anything without apprehension. If, due to our perfection of merit and wisdom, we are capable of giving our hearts and even physical bodies without apprehension, then a great loving-kindness and compassion is produced, within which ourselves and others are without any differentiation.

Once when the Buddha was developing the Bodhisattva-Path in a previous life, He was walking along a path accompanied by Ananda. He met a Brahmin who said: "Lord, as you are one who says that he likes to give, I have a request. My mother says that she needs a living person's eye as medicine in order to recover. Therefore, Oh Buddha, please give me one of your eyes."

The Buddha heard his request and replied, "Oh really! Then please take this eye of mine and use it for her medicine," and removed one of His eyes and gave it to the Brahmin. But when the Brahmin received the eye he threw it to the ground, stepped on it, crushed it under his foot and repeatedly rubbed it into the ground. Seeing what the Brahmin had done, Ananda shouted, "Hey! The Lord removed His eye and gave it to you to make medicine; but instead, you step on it, crush it under your foot and rub it into the ground! How can you do this?"

But the Buddha said, "Ananda, Ananda, just leave things as they are. Once I have given something, what does it matter if this man uses it as medicine or throws it down, crushes it under his foot, and rubs it into the ground? Giving ends with the act of giving. What he does afterwards with the gift is of no concern; so let's go on." And Ananda and the Buddha continued on their way. When practicing as a Bodhisattva in the past, the Buddha often did this sort of action. Consequently, once giving is finished the matter is

ended. It is of no concern to the donor as to how the recipient uses the thing given.

In another life, the Bodhisattva was walking along a path with two other people. Upon reaching a certain spot He saw a tigress who had given birth to cubs. They had nothing to eat and were all about to die of starvation. Though the cubs tried to feed from their mother's breast, there was nothing there for them to suck. The Bodhisattva saw this pitiful sight and said to His two friends that He had some business to attend to and that they ought to go on ahead. He approached the tigers, wounded his body, and made the let blood flow into the tigress' mouth. The tigress, who was completely exhausted from having been without food for so many days, gulped down the blood, and recovering her senses a little, opened her eyes. Seeing wounded prey in front of her, she suddenly leaped up and ate Him. After waiting for a long time, His two friends returned along the road which they had come by to look for their friend. However, after the tigress had finished, only the hands and head of their friend were remaining.

In this story also, the Buddha, while still a Bodhisattva, was willing to give even his own body to aid other sentient beings. If we already regret giving others one or two thousand Won (\$2-4), how would we feel if we had to give away our own body? Please keep in mind that, due to the law of karma, by offering this body which is, for each of us, our most vitally important possession, won't we obtain a body many times superior to the one we gave away? But above all, won't giving without attachment to form enable us to receive the greatest of rewards – the fruit of Buddhahood? Ultimately, it is because the Buddha could have such an aspiration and then bring it to fruition that He is worthy of the appellation 'the holiest one within all the Three Planes of Existence'. He became such a great accomplished one because while making merit, He could give not only material things, but even His own heart and body without regret or apprehension. For that reason, we who are disciples of the Buddha should, even in little things, enjoy giving to others without regret.

Sila-Paramita : The Day of Ethical Restraint (Tuesday)

Everywhere, and during all the commonplace activities of daily life, let us maintain standards of discipline, etiquette and decorum so that there will be no obstructions in our conscience. It is only by maintaining such ethical standards that we will be able to recover the dignity we possessed as a cultured people during the Silla and Koryo periods. We Koreans of the present era should feel humiliated when we hear developed nations call us underdeveloped. We must reflect on what caused our nation, which preserves such a long history and brilliant cultural tradition, to become like this. Frankly this degeneration was caused by a lack of both personal discipline and public morality. We must bear in mind that bad habits can become second nature. Though it might be only in trivial matters, piling up these unskillful actions in a spontaneous and unconscious way, has brought today's result. Therefore let us try to maintain standards of discipline, etiquette and decorum in our life, and prevent obstructions from developing in our consciences. It is not possible that we can deceive others without having first cheated our own conscience. Consequently, let us then try not to deceive our consciences.

Keeping the precepts is like adorning one's body with the seven jewels. The precepts are the guide to the liberation from Sangsara. Accordingly, Sila-Paramita is precisely the Perfection which eliminates worldliness from the minds of living beings. Sila means to caution, signifying that we do not act wrongly because we are cautious about all our actions. The five precepts are the basis of Sila: these consist of not killing, not stealing, refraining from wrong sexual conduct, not lying and not drinking intoxicating liquors.

We do not kill because it ultimately is an action which results in our own murder; for, if I kill someone else, in a later life he in turn will kill me. Not to steal means that we do not take things which are not given. A robber who threatens someone with weapons can take away that person's material things, but he cannot take away his merit. We must all try to live a wholesome

life through making merit; for we cannot live a good life only through money. Therefore, since stealing others' possessions diminishes our own merit, we must abstain from stealing. Refraining from improper sexual conduct means that it is improper to have sexual relations with anyone apart from one's own wife or husband. If, because of the darkness of our minds, we indulge in improper sexual relations, it is impossible to maintain a happy household. Not telling lies means not to deceive others. If we tell lies we lose our trustworthiness, and others will not believe us when we talk. Finally, we must refrain from drinking liquor because, since we become like insane people if we drink, our seeds of wisdom will be destroyed.

Therefore Sila is the lantern to illuminate the darkness, the boat to cross the sea, the best medicine for the sick, the nourishment of Truth, the ladder to spiritual accomplishment, an umbrella in the rain, and the way to awaken to one's True Nature.

Ksanti-Paramita : The Day of Patient Endurance (Wednesday)

Enduring insults, all kinds of dissatisfactions, and anxieties, let us treat all men like the Buddha. Treating everyone as the Buddha means that, through our understanding of the Dharma, we have respect for one another. The defilements (the presence of which causes us to treat men wrongly) are not something innate: they are like clouds in the sky, bubbles on the water, or dew on the tips of grass. They are created by the discriminative consciousness which arises according to the environmental objects present at any particular time. Though it is common that people try to understand Buddhism through intellectual understanding, intellectual knowledge is merely theoretical opinion; because the intellect is subject to arising and cessation we cannot understand Buddhism through it. It is only when we have awakened from this discriminative mind that we are first able to understand Buddhism. That is to say, it is only after awakening that we gain the assurance that we ourselves are Buddhas.

Patient Endurance is the way to awaken to the 'I', the way to accomplish all wholesome actions, and its cultivation will enable us to accumulate the merit which produces both the achievement of Buddhahood, and the capacity to save all sentient beings.

When we first begin mental cultivation, it is as if we are trying to train an ox. An ox which is running around wildly must be lassoed and grazed until it becomes tame. In mental training also, having started out on the Path using the hua-t'ou, we must bear patiently all difficulties; and by continuing to practice assiduously, enlightenment will surely come. Hence Patient Endurance, which is the bearing of difficult things and of those things which we do not like to do, is precisely the way to become enlightened to the 'True-I'. As it is easy to do bad things but difficult to do good things, the endurance of the difficult directly implies the accomplishment of wholesome actions. Finally, after awakening to the Mind, one is able to guide others; so, the achievement of Buddhahood and the deliverance of all sentient beings is accomplished through the merit from endurance.

Further, not quarreling, not deceiving our own consciences, and not making distinctions, is the perfection of Patient Endurance, which will destroy the ignorant mind. We must establish our will like T'ai Shan. T'ai Shan does not move; similarly, if we have already established our will, we should not allow it to waver. The sea has the ability to embrace everything; all things are accepted by it. Our mind too, in the same way as the sea, should be able to accept all things with boundless tolerance.

The tongue which produces careless speech is like an axe used to kill oneself. If we speak carelessly it is easy to become an enemy of others; and ultimately we can say that it is an action which amounts to suicide.

When we suffer cold and hunger, the determination to practice the Path will appear, but when we have a full belly and a warm back only laziness will grow. Having a full stomach and a warm back cannot be man's greatest happiness. Though cows and

horses can also have a full belly and a warm back, can these be considered man's greatest happiness? Rather, it is only when men are engaged in the unimpaired fulfillment of human obligations that there will be true happiness. When we suffer pain from difficult objects in the environment, and also reflect that in our past we have been without merit or wisdom, it is impossible that the mind of the Path will not spontaneously appear.

Virya-Paramita : The Day of Exercising Zealous Effort (Thursday)

Do not be lax in the practice of giving, maintaining the precepts, and patient endurance. Whatever is upright, perform it diligently and persistently push forward; but let's do it secretly, unknown to others. In Confucianism also, it is said: "Develop virtue in the manner of a thief." That is to say, in the cultivation of virtue do things secretly as if you were trying to steal something. This is what is meant by acting in secret: whether others see what you do or not, you simply go ahead and do it as a matter of course. Those people who do good things only when others are looking, and bad things when others are not, are hypocrites and are nothing but double-faced.

The things for which we must put forward effort are: truthfulness, application, frugality, patience, investigation, sympathetic joy and diligent study. People must practice truthfulness; for if one is not truthful one ends up being an unreliable person, and people in this world all dislike unreliable people. Application consists in living sincerely and diligently, without being lazy. Patience means enduring the difficult, for if we cannot endure we finally will not succeed at anything. We must live a life of frugality, for this assures that the family will always be well supplied with the necessities of life. From not wasting things and careful conservation, both material and spiritual merit are accumulated. By investigation people can display their own creativity. Sympathetic joy means to rejoice over the things done well by others, because the actions of others should be the same as our actions. Finally, by studying diligently we can become a person

who equals or surpasses others.

If, while we are practicing, the Mind of Great Anger, the Mind of Great Bravery, and the Mind of Great Doubt manifest, they will be the forces needed to awaken to our 'True-I' and will be a source of strength in all our duties. If we ask why we should produce this great anger while practicing: though the Buddhas of the three time-periods, the Patriarchs and teachers of history, and the good-knowing advisors present now in the world, all say that the mind, the Buddha and sentient beings are without distinction, we are still playing the role of a sentient being who has arisen through discriminations. If we reflect that we have spent all this time in laziness, how could we not become angry? By maintaining this type of anger, and by practicing with an earnest spirit, we can bring the practice to completion. Further, if the Mind of Great Bravery does not manifest we will never be able to remove the mask of a sentient being. Finally, if the Mind of Great Doubt does not manifest, we will not be able to uncover the great truth of the universe. Although it is said that the mind is Buddha, this is ultimately only a label for the mind, and not the real essence of the mind. So, consequently we must investigate: "What is this mind?" If we do not possess such a doubt we will not be able to achieve a great Awakening.

There is a legend about trying to find a lost jewel by scooping the water from the ocean, which illustrates the type of energy we must put forth in our practice. In ancient times there was a man who went out to sea; after undergoing all sorts of hardships he discovered a beautiful jewel. Placing the jewel in the palm of his hand, he admired it from every angle, exclaiming: "Marvelous! Marvelous!" The God of the Sea, who was observing the man, did not want such a priceless jewel to be taken onto the land, and secretly caused the jewel to slip from the man's hand and drop into the sea. Unaware of the God of the Sea's presence, the man saw it slip from his hand and drop into the ocean. He dived into the water to search for it, but however much he searched, he could not find it anywhere. After reflecting about what to do, he resolved that even though he might have to scoop out the water

from the entire ocean, he would find the jewel. So everyday he scooped out the water from the ocean. One year, two years, three years passed; invariably as dawn broke he would go down to the seashore and begin scooping out the ocean's water.

One day the God of the Sea asked the man, "Why do you scoop out the water from my ocean every day?"

The man replied. "I have dropped a jewel into the ocean, and I am bailing out the water in order to find it."

Deriding him, the God of the Sea said, "The circumference of the ocean is 40,000 yojanas; how can you scoop out all that water?"

The man answered, "Even though this is an ocean of 40,000 yojanas, that is still a finite number. However as my life is infinite, if I cannot scoop it all out in this life, I can finish it in the next; and if I cannot do it all in the next life, I can do it in the life following that. If I continue in this manner, someday the water in the ocean will all be scooped out, and I will find my jewel."

The God of the Sea thought about it for awhile, reflecting, "This naive man will not only empty all the water from the ocean and find that jewel, but will destroy my home as well!" And the story is that he produced the gem and gave it to the man.

This man also was no other than the Buddha, when he was training as a Bodhisattva during earlier lives, and the story of searching for the jewel is an allegory of the search for the Mind. Consequently, in that search, if we merely have firm resolution and innocent simplicity we will succeed.

Dhyana-Paramita : The Day of Stillness and Stability of Mind (Friday)

When the mind is at ease, peacefulness results; but Enlightenment of the mind brings true peacefulness. We cannot consider material things to be that which is of the highest value

for mankind. It is only upon the mind's enlightenment that we can consummate man's highest value. Hence, let's realize mental peace by awakening to the Ultimate Truth underlying phenomena.

When the body is clean and the mind pure, our wisdom will be bright. We cannot fill a broken vessel with water; however, when the water settles down in a clean vessel, the moon of the mind can reflect in it. Similarly, the more the mind quietens, the more the brightness of the wisdom coming from the self-nature will manifest. Eventually, when Conceit is completely removed we will awaken to the Mind, 'the Immovable'.

When we have finally obtained mastery over our destiny within birth and death, we are content, understand our role in society, and are unwavering amidst the waves of the world produced by the 'Eight Winds'. Establishing mastery over our destiny in birth and death means that anywhere and anytime our mind is quiet and peaceful, and because we are no longer subject to birth and death, our life exists eternally. Knowing our role in society means that since we have an assignment to become a Buddha, we should put forth all our effort in order to accomplish it. We must learn to be content with what we possess. In the world of material things we can never know satisfaction; but after enlightenment, as there is nothing higher to be wished for, we can know true contentment. All the types of worldly-waves come from not knowing contentment. Gain, loss; fame, disrepute; praise, criticism; happiness and suffering, are the 'Eight Winds' that produce the worldly-waves in this realm of sentient beings.

Like the mouth of a bottle, which can hold nothing, our mouth should be empty of speech. If we speak too much, then not only will there be few useful words in our speech, but there will be the danger of saying inappropriate things. For this reason it was said that the tongue which produces careless speech becomes like an axe hacking oneself. The less a man speaks, the more he will cultivate merit inwardly.

Our sense doors should be firmly shut like the gate of a fortress. Since the consciousness of man enters and leaves through these six doors (of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) those who cultivate the mind must firmly and resolutely secure the consciousness like the gate of a fortress so that the six thieves (the six sense objects) may not enter. Only by doing this will be obtain peace of mind.

Prajna-Paramita : The Day of Wisdom (Saturday)

Wisdom is not something particular which can be acquired, but is simply that which knows to eat when we're hungry, to sleep when we're tired, and to use a fan when we're hot. Wisdom is the thing which makes a dish into a teacup when it is filled with tea, a sauce dish when it is full of sauce, a rice bowl when it is heaped with rice, and a medicine pot when it is filled with medicine. But there is no set method in the functioning of this wisdom. Wisdom is simply that which knows how to utilize things according to the case in hand.

The purity of the mind is the Buddha.

The radiance of the mind is the Dharma.

The mind without obstructions is the Tao.

Ladies and gentlemen, do you know what is the brightness of the mind? Have you ever seen the radiance which emanates from the mind? The enlightened man is able to see the radiance of the mind; but even though we are unable to see this radiance, we are nevertheless using it at this very moment, on this very spot. We are using the brightness which emanates from the mind, and this brightness is precisely that which is able to hear the sound of this staff when it is struck against this platform, and that which can see this staff when it is held up. If there was no radiance issuing from the mind we would not be able to see or hear. The sun and moon are not dissociated from our minds; rather, they are precisely the sun and moon which exist within our minds. It is because our mind is dark that, even though we utilize the radiance of our sun and moon, we are unaware that we are

making use of it. We should judge well what is wholesome and unwholesome in our lives, and act so that the mind is always pure, bright, and free of obstructions. We should also behave so that we are never uncertain about the rightness of our actions. This sort of bright wisdom is the sword which dispels the Three Poisons (greed, hatred and delusion) and is precisely the Perfection of Wisdom. Thus, let us prepare in advance for the coming seven days, by strengthening our wisdom.

Service : The Perfection of the Simultaneous Practice of All the Paramitas (Sunday)

Service means to put all forms of wholesome action into practice by rendering service to others. After perfecting the Six Paramitas discussed above, let us then, through the following Four Guiding Dharmas which are the secret for success in life, treat all men according to karmic circumstance. Let us praise the good actions of others, show Great Compassion, and help those in difficulties and misery.

The first of the Four Guiding Dharmas is giving, which means giving other not only the material help, but also the spiritual help which they can appreciate. Usually people only know how to earn money but don't know how to make use of it. However we must understand that the use we put money to also creates earnings. Should I help others either materially or spiritually, I will sometime, via karmic reward, receive aid when I am in need of help. This is due to the relationship between cause and effect. Let us accordingly help others to the fullest extent possible in material and spiritual matters.

The second is loving speech, which signifies that we should try to guide others with kindness and through gentle and warm speech. Loving speech is putting into practice loving-kindness and compassion in all of our words. Subordinates speaking respectfully to superiors, and superiors speaking affectionately to subordinates: this is clearly the functioning of loving speech.

The third is beneficial action, meaning guiding others in a helpful manner during all our physical and mental activities through the persistent practice of wholesome deeds. Building schools for learning, irrigation reservoirs to provide water, and bridges for convenient passage, and similar pursuits which bring benefit to others, is beneficial action. Though beneficial action appears to be only the aiding of others, it actually is the prelude to benefits which will return to ourselves; thus, we should not perform beneficial deeds with indifference. We all must do numerous beneficial things.

The fourth is co-operation, which means to guide while working together with others in full consideration of the other's character, even to the extent of changing one's own behavior in order to inspire trust in the other person. For example, if we wanted to reform a thief, we would reform him under the guise of becoming a thief ourselves. This is why, when compared to other things, co-operation is the most difficult of all practices.

Conclusion

A Great Man is searching for the sword which can cut off the lion's horns.

Who is going to give it to a lifeless doll?

Ghosts do not come out into the sunlight of the bright day.

Ladies and gentleman, have you ever seen a lion with horns? Even an ordinary lion is frightening enough, but can you imagine how frightening a lion with horns would be? The lion with horns is an appellation for the Buddha. The Buddha became such a fearsome person because He awakened to the great truth of the universe. So, all of you here listening to this Dharma-lecture: why are you listening? Ultimately isn't it to become, like the Buddha, a fearsome person who has awakened to his Mind? Ultimately, the purpose of listening to any Dharma-lecture is to become as outstanding a person as the Buddha was; and what the Dharma Master says is all in the hope that you will accomplish that goal. Therefore listening to Dharma-lectures and

cultivating the mind is done in order to find the sword of wisdom. One who is dull like a lifeless doll cannot find this sword. If we will only make our spirits clear and spring forward courageously, we will be able to find the sword of wisdom which, actually, we have been carrying since time immemorial. Before the brightness of wisdom, phantoms cannot exist. The brightness of our minds is as bright as the sun during broad daylight; before that brightness we cannot be dulled by illusory things. By awakening to our 'True-I', and through the practice of befitting ourselves and others, let us show kindness to others, accomplish the Path of Bodhisattvahood, and transform this world into a Buddha Land.