

Ten Perfections and the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification

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Prologue

Siddhattha Gautama, the scion of King *Suddhōdhan* and Queen *Māhāmāyā* of *Kapilvatthu* kingdom achieved Perfect Enlightenment, *Bodhi* on full moon day of Vesāka, after accomplishing all the ten perfections beneath the Peepal (*Ficus Religiosa*) tree, eminent as “*Bodhi Tree* or *Bo-Tree*” at *Urevella* presently known as Bodhagaya, on the bank of river *Phalgu* or *Phaggu* or *Nilanjanā* [1]. *The our Buddha* meditated for several eons to accomplish all the ten perfections from the time of *Dipāṅkar Buddha*, the first Buddha in the chronology of Buddhas. At the time of *Dipāṅkar Buddha*, the first Buddha in the lineage, *Siddhattha Gautama*, our Buddha, was born as *Sumegha Pandita* in a wealthy and erudite family. He renounced his royal family’s luxury life, vast wealth and eminence after the passing away of his parents and became an ascetic thereafter. One day *Dipāṅkar Buddha* had to visit a city, *Sumegha Pandita* observed that some people of the city were busy in decorating the place in a beautiful manner to welcome him. He comes to know after enquiring a person that *Dipāṅkar Buddha* was visiting this place. Thereafter he requested to do some work in honour of *Dipāṅkar Buddha* [2]. He was allowed to fulfil his volition. The Bodhisattva *Sumegha Pandita* made an aspiration at the feet of *Dipāṅkara Buddha* that he would achieve Enlightenment like *Dipāṅkar Buddha* and become a Buddha in the future. These Ten Perfections become the standard constituents of the Bodhisattva’s practice and the essential requirements for achieving the ultimate goal, The Bodhi. The practice of ten perfections is treated in broad and general terms to be accomplished by practising *Vipassanā* meditation. The technique of *Vipassanā* meditation passes directly from the time of Buddha through the chain of teachers-students tradition for a period of a thousand years.

Vipassana-Ācariyā S.N. Goenka **reintroduced** and **popularized** the Burmese-style *Vipassanā* method **on a large scale** in India beginning in 1969. He learned this technique of Meditation under the noble guidance of his teacher Venerable Sayaji U Ba Ka Khin (1899-1971CE) who was the disciple of Venerable Saya Thet Gyi (1873-1945CE) and Ladi Sayadaw (1846-1923 CE) [3]. He taught *vipassanā* meditation throughout India by organizing camps for ten days or so initially in various cities. He always emphasised the fact that teachings of Buddha are so immense and fruitful for the welfare of the human race and none of the other teachings can provide so much graceful fruition for the benevolence of the society so far.

One can practice tetra dimensional *vipassanā* meditation, teachings explained in *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* for the benevolence of human race. The fourth dimension of *vipassanā*; *Dhammānupassanā* consisting Five Impediments, Five Aggregates, Six Sense Sources, Seven Enlightenment Faculties and Four Noble Truths to achieve the ultimate goal-*Nibbāna* [4].

However there is no mention of Ten Perfections in *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and also in the Principal doctrine of Buddhist Canon “*Tipitak*” consisting *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Sutta Piṭaka* and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* except *Buddhavaṃsa*, a book of *Kuddaka Niakāya* and parables as *Jatakas*. *Jataka Kathās* and *Buddhavaṃsa* were the later addition to *Sutta Piṭaka* in *Kuddaka Niakāya* since the ten perfections is the subject of later period of conjugation of *Tipitak* and not the part and parcel of *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

Then there is a big question that arises: how to meditate these perfections to achieve *Nibbāna*. On one hand, these perfections are the essential qualifications for attaining *Nibbāna* and

ultimately Buddhahood; The Bodhi on other hand there is no mention of these perfections in *Tipitaka* as described above. In the absence of these perfections, no one can achieve Buddhahood. The ten perfections are inherent contents of mind; the mental contents are known as *Dhamma* that is practiced in “*Dhammānupassanā*”. Thus Vipassanā is the technique of purification of mind.

There is an ample scope of analysing the fruition of accomplishing ten perfections along with the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification. Our endeavour is to establish the evolution of the Ten Perfections in Octa Dimensional Route of Purity leading to liberation from suffering. The Octa Dimensional Route of Purification, known as “Middle Path of Buddha” is the principal doctrines of purification of mind mentioned in *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta*, the manual of meditation.

Analysis of Ten Perfections and Octa Dimensional Route of Purification

Buddhism is not meant only for some intelligentsia who want to prove their right over the system of human race or it is not a matter of arguments but for the benevolence of common men who can perceive and practice *vipassanā* meditation; might be able to get rid of suffering gradually. The observation of *vipassanā* meditation is beyond the eloquence and intellectual refinements because it has to be perceived in actual fruition though the difference in results as it leads to a difference of efficiency in practice of the meditator.

The following are the silent features of ten perfections showing their relationship with Octa Dimensional Route of Purification that is divided into three facets - Wisdom, Morality and Concentration[5].

The perfections are completely the contents of mind i.e. *Dhamma*; they are the valuable virtual qualities and their reflections are always external through body and speech. Perfections are cultivated and accomplished internally through the mind. This is a lifelong process to qualify these virtues through the practice of doctrine of Buddha. That takes several lives, even for some eons to accomplish these perfections as *Sumegha Pandita* did.

Gist of constituents of Ten Perfections and The Octa Dimension Route of Purification are as under :-

Ten Perfections	The Octa Dimensional Route of Purification
Generosity	Right View
Morality	Right Aspiration
Relinquishment	Right Speech
Wisdom	Right Action
Vigour	Right Livelihood
Calmness	Right Effort
Truth	Right Mindfulness
Resolution	Right Concentration
Goodwill	

Equanimity	
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Table-1: Ten Perfections and The Octa Dimension Route of Purification

All Perfections and the Octa-Dimension Route of Purification are analyzed in depth, and thereafter their relationship is established with the constituents of the Route to clarify how the practice of Vipassanā meditation also encompasses the Ten Perfections..

The Octa Dimensional Route of Purification is classified into three constituents – Wisdom, Morality and Concentration [6]. Below we explore them in more detail.

Wisdom (*Paññā*)

Wisdom (*Paññā*) has two branches for cultivation and development of wisdom Right View (*Sammādiṭṭhi*) and Right Aspiration (*Sammāsaṅkappa*).

1. **Right View** is the understanding of four Noble Truths and three characteristics of existence:-
 - 1.1. Understanding of Suffering,
 - 1.2. Understanding of cause of suffering
 - 1.3. Understanding of cessation of suffering
 - 1.4. Understanding of the route leading to cessation of suffering and
 - 1.5. The Understanding of three characteristics of existence: - Transient nature of *saṃkhara*, Suffering and non-self.

Thus the right view is the knowledge of nature in their true sense; as they are and it is not based on irrational beliefs.

2. **Right Aspirations** aimed at relinquishment (*Nekkhamma saṅkappa*) from worldly illusion, attractions and possessions; at compassionate thoughts (*Avyāpāda Saṅkappa*) that is freedom from suffering and ill will; at thoughts of harmlessness (*Avihimsā Saṅkappa*) which are opposed to cruelty and for ultimate goal, *Nibbāna*. Right Aspirations refer to the thoughts of selflessness, relinquishment or detachment from thoughts of afflictions. Right Aspirations are thoughts of spreading goodwill and non-violence; extended to all sentient beings. It is important that the thoughts of relinquishment, compassion and non-violence are the qualities of wisdom that tend to purify the mind.

- 2.1. **Perfection of Relinquishment (*Nekkhamma Pāramī*)** is also defined as sacrificing or abandoning one's belongings forever without any craving. Relinquishment is the sacrifice of all kinds of material life support such as residence and personal belongings etc. For his daily food requirements he begs from other householders. One is relinquishing craving, grasping, attachments and afflictions. In this way he dissolves his ego. A Monk or Nun can cultivate and develop relinquishment for the purpose of dissolving ego and he/she uses the opportunity for the welfare of the human race and the donor who provided them life support to exist.
- 2.2. **Perfection of Generosity (*Dāna Pāramī*)** is defined as sacrificing of belongings without expecting any return in response to that and donating to any person even without knowing his identity. The parting away of the fruit of generosity without expecting any return of that; is also the generosity. The desire comes up to lend the hand in support of others in any way by any time of need then he realises that there cannot be greater help to someone else than to help such a person in need and he learns the way out of suffering and sorrow.

- 2.3. **Perfection of Goodwill (*Mettā Pāramī*):**- The prime object of Goodwill is to cultivate altruistic and limitless love to all sentient beings without ulterior motive, irrespective of whether they deserve it or not and also without any self interest. Goodwill (*Mettā*) is cultivated for all sentient beings unconditionally in ultimate sense without any remorse and obligation. Goodwill is the thought of saving and welfare of life of all sentient beings and refrains from violence to cause harm to any sentient beings.
- 2.4. **Perfection of Wisdom (*Paññā Pāramī*):** - wisdom is the understanding of three marks of existence, true nature of substances, refrain from misconceptions, extend the hand in support of the generosity of living beings, practicing, perceiving the four noble truths [7].

Thus wisdom, relinquishment, generosity and goodwill, the four kinds of perfections are fond their roots in the wisdom, the one constituent of Octa Divisional Route of purification

Morality

Morality:-The second constituent of the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification is Morality. The Morality is divided further into three branches: Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*), Right Action (*Sammā Kammanto*) and Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājivo*).

1. **Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*):**-Right Speech deals with abstaining from untruthfulness, slandering, harsh words and frivolous talks.
2. **Right Action (*Sammā Kammanto*) :-** Right Action deals with abstaining from slaughtering of living beings, stealing and sexual misconduct activities.
3. **Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājivo*):**- Right Action deals with five types of trades that are discarded by disciples. Those are trading in human beings, weapons, poison, intoxicants and flesh; their life support business is not considered as right livelihood. Monks/nuns are not considered to perform hypocritical conduct as it is considered wrong livelihood.

Perfection of Morality (*Sīla Pāramī*):-The morality can be developed by following the five basic precepts by disciples, the laity (*Upāsaka*) in day to day life. The five basic principles of morality are evading from killing living beings, evading from stealing activities, evading from committing sexual misconduct or adultery, evading from telling untrue and evading from consuming all kinds of intoxicants. There are eight and ten precepts for serious meditators and Monks and Nuns. These are vocal, physical and mental virtues. One extricates all kinds of evils through practicing morality and is devoted to do good for oneself and other sentient beings. Morality prevents crimes such as a person becoming corrupt by luxury in the society. Practice of morality purifies all kinds of vocal, physical and mental actions.

Perfection of Truth (*Saccaṃ Pāramī*) is the vocal action that reveals whatever it listens, sees, smells, tastes and perceived in true nature as it is. By practicing morality in life one sets to maintain truth honestly at all kinds of speech at every level, however truthfulness is practiced in depth. There is no room for misconception or doubt. The second precept is- “evade from telling a lie” that is one must tell the truth without any trace of a lie. Truth is the cornerstone of all precepts practiced by one to observe meditational conditions. If one speaks a lie, then one’s meditation cannot be mature. In this way one is not disturbed externally as well as internally. Whatever he observed he perceived in natural form, in its true sense.

Thus, Morality and Truth, (*Sīla Pārami and Saccaṃ Pārami*) both the perfections are considered well utilised under the subject of Morality (*Sīla*); the second constituent of the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification.

Concentration

The third constituent of the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification is Concentration; consisting three branches: Right Efforts, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration

1. **Right Efforts (*Sammāvyāyāmo*)**:- The Right efforts are four kinds
 - 1.1. The endeavour to root out of evil that has already existed.
 - 1.2. The endeavour to impede the arising of non-existed evil.
 - 1.3. The endeavour to develop non-existed goods.
 - 1.4. The endeavour to promote that good which has already existed.
2. **Right Mindfulness (*Sammāsati*)**:- Right Mindfulness is cognitive awareness with regards to body, feelings, mind and mental contents (*Dhamma*) at the present moment without any judgement.
3. **Right Concentration (*Sammāsamādhi*)**: Right Concentration is an equanimous state of mind.

Perfection of Vigour (*Viriya Pārami*) is the resource of efforts for concentration and regains mindfulness. Without vigour one cannot meditate to stop evil occurring or root out evil that occurred and suffers with impediments. He cannot promote good that occurred and not develop good, not existed.

Perfection of Calmness (*Khanti Pārami*) is the important requirement of concentration to be equanimous. Calmness has the characteristic of acceptance and remains inactive for the sake of concentration.

Perfection of Resolution (*AdhiṭṭhānaPārami*) has the quality to fix the requisites of the concentration for the Enlightenment. Its function is to overcome the indifferences occurring in the mind and creates irregularity in concentration and delayed resolution. Its manifestation is unshakeable in meditation and it is a necessary form of concentration.

Perfection of Equanimity (*UpekkhāPārami*) is the fruit of Resolution and promoting the concentration towards Enlightenment. The state of equanimity is promoting the aspect of evenness and the state of mental peace for concentration.

Thus the perfections of Vigour, Calmness, Resolution and Equanimity are composed under the head of Concentration (*Samādhi*) of The Octa Dimensional Route of Purification.

Therefore all the Ten Perfections comprise their ways in the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification- Wisdom, Morality and Concentration as shown in Table -2.

Wisdom (<i>Paññā</i>)	(1)Right View (<i>SammāDitṭhi</i>) (2) Right Aspiration (<i>SammāSaṅkappo</i>)	1. Wisdom (<i>Paññā</i>) 2. Relinquishment (<i>Abhiniskarman</i>) 3. Giving (<i>Danaṃ</i>) 4. Goodwill (<i>Mettā</i>)
Morality (<i>Sīla</i>)	(3)Right Speech (<i>SammāVācā</i>), (4)Right Action (<i>SammāKammanto</i>) (5)Right Livelihood (<i>SammāĀjivo</i>)	5. Morality (<i>Sīla</i>) 6. Truth (<i>Sacca</i>)

Concentration (<i>Samādhi</i>)	(6) Right Effort (<i>Sammā Vyāyāmo</i>) (7) Right Mindfulness (<i>Sammā Sati</i>) (8) Right Concentration (<i>Sammā Samādhi</i>)	7.Vigour (<i>Viriya</i>) 8.Calm (<i>Khanti</i>) 9.Resolution (<i>Adhithāna</i>) 10.Equanimity (<i>Upekkha</i>)
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Table No.2

Epilogue

The ten Perfections and the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification represent a distinct ethical framework in Buddhist practice of Vipassanā Meditation but share common goals and principles. While the ten perfections emphasize the growth of ethical conduct over life times; the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification provides a practical and logical guide for cultivating these qualities in daily life. Together they create a holistic approach to spiritual development, addressing the ethical, mental and wisdom aspects of the way. By integrating the perfections into the Octa Dimensional Route of Purification, practitioners can progress gradually towards the ultimate goal of liberation, achieving a harmonious balance of compassion, wisdom and mindfulness.

In this way ten perfections are practiced through *Vipassanā* meditation, the path of purity that leads to liberation from sufferings. This route is result oriented traditionally having a long standing and the technique is unique and original since the ancient period of The Tathāgata Buddha. This technique is traditional, long established, unaltered, unadulterated, unimaginative, unaffected, and un-faulty from the time of Buddha. That is always free from doubt and mistrust. This is completely and purely genuine *Vipassanā* technique, leading to accomplish a suffering free life

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