

STUPA PROGRESS

Progress on the stupa is ongoing even if slow. A fair amount of work had to be done by Rev. Leon on the metal uprights that are embedded in the concrete base and will uphold the roof over the Buddhas head. It took the welding torch to soften the metal in places to bend it so that the bars will follow the pattern of the stone trellis. Once that was done, the bars were painted shining red, to make them a symbol of the joy that arises from sitting in meditation.

The six pillars also remind us of the six Paramitas, or virtuous attitudes, that protect the security and peace of the temple of our own heart, our sitting place and practice. The six Virtues are the answer in training to anger and despair; whenever we cultivate them negativity melts away.

The first one is generosity, the willingness to give of ourselves for the benefit of all beings. Whether it is money, time, or a selfish desire that needs to be curbed, generosity is what softens our mind.

Second is morality, the keeping of the Precepts in the conviction that practice is worth doing and will end negativity.

Third is patience, the quality that makes it possible for us to bear difficulties in conditions or in human relationships with gentle compassion and equanimity.

Fourth, devotion, which helps us to give full attention and care to whatever we find in front of us.

Fifth is meditation, the practice of coming back to being still over and over again, which leads to the ever-deepening of the sixth Virtue, Wisdom.

Wisdom then, by its nature, will again give rise to a deeper Generosity and so on.

Recently a friend of mine witnessed an angler catching some fish and leaving them to die on the shore. The sight of the dying fish caused despair and anger to arise in my friend, who left the scene feeling helpless. Here is where the six Paramitas might have helped: an offering of some money could have bought the fish from the angler, the fish could have been put back in the sea with a new lease on life. This releasing of captured animals is an old Buddhist practice and shows Wisdom, Devotion and Generosity. Walking around the Stupa will lead us past all these Paramitas in succession—may they be an inspiration to all beings.