

Week 2 Perfect Vision & Right View

Buddhism Level 2 – Doctrinal Dharma

RESOURCES REQUIRED

View exercise cards

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Recognise difference between Perfect Vision (as direct intuited understanding) & Right View (as conceptual expression of PV)

Our task is to reflect on RV to fill it out into PV

Identify moments of PV in our life – our “sights”

Make connection to 4NTs as RV, expressions of Buddha’s experience of PV

Understand our views as maps, see their provisional nature

Recognise the conditioning relationship between views & emotions

Recognise the possibility of degrees of rightness of a view.

MEDITATION (10 MINS)

INTRODUCTION TO SESSION

Looking at how we understand the world; the invisible framework of views and beliefs we have; how that affects us; how the Dharma might help

Home practice review

Did you manage to notice dukkha arising sometimes?

Did you learn anything about it: it’s nature, it’s cause? How do you know when some experience is dukkha?

Previous class Review

PERFECT VISION & RIGHT VIEW

Last week saw how Buddha (Siddhartha’s) experience of the 4 sights sent him on an existential quest.

Could say he had a glimpse of “Perfect Vision” – saw clearly a glimpse of the truth of life; wanted to understand more fully. For a moment had a perspective on life that was broader than the usual.

Exercise on our glimpses Perfect Vision: discussion in 3s

Can you identify moments of perfect vision in your life: glimpses of some greater sense of value? Maybe something that led to you pursuing an interest in Buddhism? Could be death of a loved one, coming close to death yourself, experience of great peace, contentment or beauty.....

Discussion

Our glimpses of PV, like the Buddha's, aren't fully formed, but are essential for motivating us to keep pursuing the vision.

Example of catching glimpse of mountain peak, then starting in that direction

Buddha's quest and Enlightenment, developed in him a full vision, a full understanding. Perfect Vision in its fullness. Vision from that peak.

Then he tried to describe that vision – could only use concepts, described his PV in terms of Right View (we'll come back to the "Right" bit)

Our moments of PV give us confidence, faith, for the times when the peak is out of sight.

TEA BREAK

VIEWS

Class Input

We all have a model of the world in our heads that we use to make sense of the world and guide our actions.

Views are maps of reality that we use to find our way around. highly simplified, because reality is far too complex for us to hold in our heads.

Other words for views are beliefs, suppositions, assumptions

The point of this session isn't to tell you what to believe, but to arrive at a sense of how views operate in our lives.

Exercise on views (pairs)

Feedback & learning points

Views condition emotions & vice versa – like two sheaves of wheat leaning against each other

Some views are more liberative than others because they're closer to reality, and hence more "right" than others.

Nagavira & I having different views on views!

Other images of views:

- Like a pair of spectacles that you wear to see better. Sometimes wear reading specs, sometimes driving specs. Similarly some views are more appropriate in some situations while others are better in others. All of them are approximations.
- Like the finger pointing at the moon. The finger bears no relationship to the moon, but it does direct us in the right directions.

FROM RIGHT VIEW TO PERFECT VISION

Right view – having conviction in views that are conducive to spiritual life

Make sure our maps are accurate enough get us where we want to go.

‘Right View’ not taking on set of beliefs by blind faith,

- being willing to try some of these new ways of thinking out for size – maybe adopting them for a while as ‘working hypotheses’, - like trying on a pair of spectacles - to see whether they do in fact open gateways to new levels of experience we had previously closed ourselves off from.

Some right views, according to the Dharma

- What we are now is strongly conditioned by our previous actions
- What we will become is strongly conditioned by our present actions
- We are fundamentally involved with other people and all other living beings in an interconnected universe
- The only certainty is that we will die, but we don’t know when
- We have the potential for full Enlightenment

Nagavira on being a hate type

Group exercise (3s)

Find one or two limiting views or attitudes in relation to others. You’ll probably notice them by feeling critical or uncomfortable in certain situations. Discuss how it limits you. Can you think of a more liberative view?

HOME PRACTICE

Take one or two limiting attitudes in relation to others (which you discussed in groups) and try to observe them operating in your life. Are you able to reflect on a more liberative / right view either at the time or afterwards?

FURTHER READING

“Ways of thinking” – Mitra Foundation Course – Background reading posted to group website

What is the Dharma, Sangharakshita, Introduction

Vision of Human Existence, Sangharakshita, CD 132 or in *Buddhism for Today and tomorrow*

Perfect Vision chapter in *Vision and Transformation*, Sangharakshita or “Right Understanding” CD 47