

No views frees¹

Growing sight. Wrong view is wrong because it is distorted by greed arising from not seeing true reality. Right view is right because it is a vision of true reality that is self-transforming, leading to the end of craving. Wrong view is not a wrong proposition that needs correction by a right view. Wrong view is harmful because it is both false and useless (without value): it does not describe reality nor prescribe how to be free of suffering. As a result, wrong view keeps us ruttet in a loop of cyclic habits, a snake trying to devour its own tail, a uroboros.

Experiencing the world (that is, the five physical senses) through wrong view is not simply a cognitive error which can be corrected by its opposite, right view. This wrong view is delusion accumulated through the habits of ages. Similarly, right view is insight into true *reality*, an insight that overlaps with what is of *value* (conducive to personal and mental development). Wrong view does not see suffering, its arising, its ending, and the way to its ending, whereas right view understands suffering, abandons craving, realizes nirvana, and follows the path to suffering's end. In short, right view knows suffering and its ending, what *is* and what *ought* to be done, or the truth and its value,

On the other hand, right view is not the rejection of a wrong teaching and the adoption of a right teaching. Nor is it an abandoning of all views: the delusion of not having any view is itself a view!² When we directly see true reality, we also see the end of craving and suffering. This direct insight combines the “is” with the “ought” of our lives, unifying reality with value. Reality is *described* in the first two noble truths; value is *prescribed* in the last two noble truths.³

The first two truths are penetrated through *cognitive* training (mindfulness); the last two truths are realized through *affective* training (a wholesome response to feelings).⁴ They may be seen separately (as thinking and feeling) by the unawakened but are unified and purified in the awakened. In fact, as the path to awakening, the four truths work naturally together to transform the practitioner. The path and the goal are really one and the same, in the sense that they are cultivated inwardly. Both truth and value are part of the same individual; the “is” and the “ought” work together to see directly into true reality.

The moment cannot be frozen. As our meditation improves—as we feel a growing sense of calm and light in body and mind—we would naturally understand the subtler nuances of the Buddha's teachings preserved and handed down in the *word*, to be teased out in the *spirit*. We are also likely to be more naturally able to see clear and joyful patterns of reality and goodness, of truth and beauty, in and around us. Overarching all this is a real sense of less desire for views, much less for dogmas. We even begin to see through religion. We are on the way to becoming emotionally independent individuals.⁵

Views are only useful in passing, like wheels working best in their turning. They could be imagined to be the individual frames in a roll of celluloid film. If we look at only a single frame, we are unlikely to get the whole picture or story, so to speak. We need to watch the whole movie from some distance

¹ From **Notion of *ditthi*** = SD 40a.1 (14.2.2-14.3.2): <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/40a.1-Notion-of-Ditthi-piya.pdf>

² See SD 40a.1 (16.1) & **Digha, nakha S** (M 74/1:497-501) esp §2 = SD 16.1: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/16.1-Dighanakha-S-m74-piya.pdf>

³ See SD 40a.1 (13.6): <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/40a.1-Notion-of-Ditthi-piya.pdf>

⁴ An important teaching in this connection is that of “wise attention” (*yoniso manasikāra*): see **Nimitta and anuvyañjana** = SD 19.14 (5): <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/19.14-Nimitta-anuvyanjana-piya.pdf>

⁵ See **Emotional independence** = SD 40a.8: <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/40a.8-Emotional-independence.-piya.pdf>

(with some detachment) to have a good idea of what the story is about. Our lives, for some of us, are movies still in the making; for some of us, movies still playing; and, as such, our lives should not be judged by its single frames, or even episodes, except as part of a learning process.

On a more mundane level, this applies to our sense-experiences. When we try to grasp a passing moment, it becomes a mental hindrance. Whatever we grasp at for a replay or for storage is already dead into the past. Or we could try, on account of an experience or memory, to project our desire into the future, but when the future is here, it almost always is not what we want or expect it to be. These are views we try to grasp: they are wrong views.

Right view, as such, is a close watch on the current trend of events, living every moment of the present. For, that is all we can really do. In an important sense, we need to *feel* the moment. To feel a moment is to fully experience it. To *think* is to paste our own views onto the moving window of reality before us. If we watch ourselves carefully enough, we might see ourselves as a series of small changes, trying to make sense of things. When we embrace this change, when we see it as being really our being itself, then we are enriched by a profound sense of fulfilment.

If we have lived long enough, we would have probably learned that *only change is certain*; the rest is uncertain. Even when we think we have known enough, or think that we have lived long enough, unwelcome surprises and rude shocks often hit us from the horizon of our unknowing.

We *think we know*: two most potent ingredients for life imprisonment. While thinking limits ideas, turning them into perishable goods and clever noises, knowing makes mummies of living truth and beauty. To *think* too much is to allow words to get in the way of our best interests. It is the dead weight that prevents our hot-air balloon from rising into the open heights. To *know* too much often strips us naked of all veneer of comfortable tales and correct lies that hide our true lives.⁶ We must be selfless enough to accept ourselves as we really are, because our wholesome transformation begins here.

How to have no views. It is possible to have no views, even when we are not arhats, or are still un-awakened. This is when we have calmly and happily gone into some deep meditation, deep enough to let go of the body and its senses, so that we are fully focussed on the mind. The mind has settled down so fully that all thoughts have been stilled. Even beginners who properly go into meditation would notice that although their thoughts are still there, they have gently receded into the background, so that they feel a great sense of stillness.

In deeper meditation, when it is so peaceful that there is nothing to focus on, there is no need for any mental effort, as it were, we simply enjoy the deep free silent bliss. For some of us (especially beginners), this might come in a flash, a first blush, but its effect is profound and forever. It is helpful to remember how good we feel at that time, as this would serve as a helpful springboard for future meditations. The constant recall of such blissful states is a self-cultivation of lovingkindness that is very effective in clearing our minds of unnecessary and unwholesome thoughts. This is of course only a temporary respite and short-term measure.

Using the past. There is a way that our past can be useful to us. We could, for example, see certain patterns in our negative conduct that brings about pain in us and others. We tend to flood our lives with past constructions of pain, depriving us of such happy memories that trigger and sustain pre-

⁶ See Piya Tan, "Stop, thinking" (Reflection 12 0411): <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/78-Stop-thinking-120411.pdf>

sent-moment happiness. We have to renounce these bad habits. We need to recall or reflect on moments of joy, patterns of happiness, good habits of the heart, we have lived.

We can put together all that we have discussed here into something *practical*. In terms of the three trainings [1.1], we can see

"rejecting wrong views"	as a vital part of the training in moral virtue;
"promoting right views"	as an aspect of mental training; and
"having no views"	as the result of wisdom training.

On an even more *practicable* level, we can see wrong views as our unhappy past: we need to let go of that as painful mental constructions. Right views, for the moment, are our happy present, relish it while it lasts. It is because this happiness is momentary, almost elusive, that it is so valuable to us. Yet there is no way of measuring its value. For true happiness needs nothing, wants nothing: it *is* everything, as it were; hence, it is immeasurable.

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[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teachings]

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