

## **On the Right View**

In this article, I would like to talk about Right View (Samma Ditthi). The Pali word Samma Ditthi is often translated as right understanding by revealing the actual content and meaning of ditthi (literally seeing, vision). Actually, Right View and right understanding are inseparable. One can say that without right understanding, there would be no Right View.

In the world, there are so many kinds of views. So, which view is Right View and which view is wrong view? The criterion is simple: in Buddhism, if some view leads us to suffering, that's the wrong view. Conversely, if some view leads us to the end of suffering, that's the Right View. Quite simple, isn't it?

When we see the world, there are so many sufferings on both an individual level and a global level. The primary cause of all that suffering is the wrong view. If the view is wrong, wrong conduct will follow. So, to solve the problem of suffering, as a first step, we should drop the wrong view and adopt the Right View. The Right View is the prerequisite and forerunner for a righteous life and ultimately for complete freedom from suffering.

Buddha said, "Just as the river Ganges inclines towards and leads to the Sea, so Right View inclines towards and leads to Nibbana." (S.IV, 180)

Now we see why the Right View comes first among the eight elements of the Eightfold Path. If there is firm understanding of Right View, the other seven stages follow naturally. Otherwise, all the stages might be seen as certain propositions imposed on us to follow. In the usual standard formula of the spiritual path, the wisdom factor comes at the end as a result—following the common sequence of morality, concentration, and wisdom. But in the Eightfold Path wisdom comes first, guiding all the following seven aspects in the right direction of emancipation.

How then, can one attain the Right View?

The starting point is to honestly check ourselves: do we have any kind of suffering, gross or subtle? If there is some suffering, we should acknowledge that we are lacking the Right View. As we develop the Right View more and more, suffering will lessen.

There are various definitions and approaches to the Right View.

First, I want to share with you a few types of Right View. As we go through the suttas, we'll find there are mundane Right View and super-mundane Right View. Here, mundane Right View basically means the right view about kamma: every

action of body, speech, and mind has karmic results and influences the kind of future rebirths and realms a being enters into.

There are three types of kamma:

1. Bright and light
2. Dark and heavy
3. A mixture of both, which most of us belong to.

Having faith in this knowledge and aspiring for the fruits of good deeds will bring merit and support favourable rebirth in the realm of samsara (the round of birth and death). However, this mundane Right View has its limitations because it is affected by taints and attachment. This type of Right View is not completely free from craving, so it cannot bring complete freedom from the round of births. It cannot bring complete emancipation from suffering.

To be completely free from any craving and enter into the realm of complete emancipation, we need the super-mundane Right View. This is nothing but the Right View of the Four Noble Truths. Unlike the mundane Right View, it does not require conviction. Super-mundane Right View is not for philosophical speculation or mere propositions to follow blindly, but it is for practice and realisation. We should always remember its pragmatic orientation and the particular activities for each of the four aspects:

1. Dukkha - should be understood
2. Cause of Dukkha (Craving) - should be abandoned
3. Cessation of Dukkha - should be realised
4. The way to cessation of Dukkha - should be developed.

To have super-mundane Right View, one needs wise attention (yoniso manasikara). In the sutta (AN2:125,126), Buddha said, "There are these two conditions for the arising of Right View. What two? The utterance of another person and wise attention." And when there is unwise attention, wrong view follows. Wise attention generally means giving thorough, penetrating attention down to its origin.

Buddha said, "To understand Right View as Right View is Right View" (MN117).

So, do you understand Right View as Right View?

Now, let us try to put Right View in a nutshell in practical terms:

1. There are various descriptions of Right View; however, all these approaches and expositions can be included to understanding the Four Noble Truths.

2.The Four Noble Truths are not simply four propositions to be accepted. All four stages require particular activities of understanding, abandoning, realising, and developing.

3.Any form of craving is a cause for the arising of Dukkha.

4.Right View reduces craving (suffering) and ultimately frees us from craving (suffering).

4.The way to Right View is wise attention (yoniso manasikara).

Finally, please remember that it's important to recognise the Right View is not only significant for the beginning, it is necessary throughout every stage of the practice in terms of Buddhism. Regardless of one's level of advancement, Right View remains crucial and should never be disregarded throughout the journey.

With metta

Bhante Anuttara