

## Dedicated Practitioners Program Homework for September 2002

### Theme: Right View or Understanding

Right Understanding or View is the first limb of the Eightfold Noble Path. It is said that one enters the path because of the apprehension of Right View, the understanding of suffering. This begins one's engagement with all the other limbs of the path. As this engagement deepens it brings a refinement of our Understanding-- maturing the relationship between life, practice, Dharma.

There are many facets to each limb of the path. For this month we will focus on working with the Four Noble Truths as an interactive template through which to study the Dharma in our lives and realize Right View. We will draw on an array of texts from Theravada, Mahayana and contemporary western teachers.

For this month we will focus on three aspects of Right Understanding: 1. The Four Noble Truths, (see MN 141); 2. Three characteristics of Right View (see MN 115); 3. The way in which Right Understanding or View is the foundation of the Dharma, permeating our life and practice. (see *Zen Mind Beginners Mind*, by Suzuki Roshi)

### Readings:

#### Theravada

Please read Majjhima Nikaya 141, *SaccavibhangaSutta*, **The Exposition of the Truths**. In MN 141, the Buddha and Sariputta expound on the Four Noble Truths. This teaching begins to illuminate the interactive relationship between the Four Truths and Right View.

#### Mahayana

Please read the following in *Zen Mind Beginners Mind*, by Suzuki Roshi. 'Study Yourself,' 'Transiency,' 'Believing in Nothing,' and 'Attachment, Non-Attachment'. Suzuki Roshi's non-dual perspective brings into question how we conceive and concretize the teachings. As he challenges our views, his broad understanding enlivens and clarifies the Dharma.

#### Contemporary Western

See pages 6-8 in *Faith* by Sharon Salzberg.

Sharon's contemporary interpretation and languaging of the Four Truths expands the teaching in based on her experience. This brings the teaching forward in a simple, personal way, making it appropriate and accessible for our time.

**Reflections**—for possible discussion with your dharma buddy, your mentor or within your DPP group.

- During this month, begin to view life through this template of the Four Truths, specifically reflecting on the recognition of suffering and attachment and the absence of suffering and attachment.
- Please question your understanding of attachment. What is this really? How does it manifest and how do you experience it? What is the difference between love and attachment?
- Often we tend to under emphasize the third Noble Truth, freedom. What happens as you being to reflect and investigate this truth? What is your experience of non-attachment? How do you actually experience it? How do recognize it? Do you value it in your direct every day experience?
- What's your understanding of the relationship between the Four Truths and Right View? Do they have an interactive impact on one another? Does recognizing the Four Truths change your view? And how does your view impact your understanding of the Four Truths?

The following are suggestions for daily practice for weeks 1 through 4.

<u>Week</u>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<b><u>1</u></b>	Suffering	Pay attention to the different qualities of suffering in your meditation practice and your daily life. List the various kinds of suffering you experience during the course of your day.
<b><u>2</u></b>	Attachment	Notice what brings forth attachment. Where does it live and how does it manifest? What happens in your mind, in your emotions, in your body?
<b><u>3</u></b>	Release	How does letting to happen? Who does the letting go? How does mindfulness facilitate letting go?
<b><u>4</u></b>	View	How has the study of the first three Truths impacted your View and Understanding? Based on your reflection and direct experience, rewrite the Four Truths in language which feels personal and authentic.

Please schedule a time to connect with your dharma buddy for a discussion of this month's reflections and practices. Incorporate the exercises from this homework into your communications with your dharma buddy. Be sure you have scheduled an interview with your mentor if you are receiving monthly interviews.