

Right Action

“Then there is the case where you recollect your own virtues: ‘(They are) untorn, unbroken, unspotted, liberating, praised by the observant, conducive to concentration.’

At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting virtue, their mind is not overcome with obsession, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. Their mind heads straight, based on virtue. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.” -AN 11:13

“Skillful virtues have freedom from remorse as their reward.

Freedom from remorse has joy as its reward.

Joy has rapture as its reward.

Rapture has calm as its reward.

Calm has pleasure as its reward.

Pleasure has concentration as its reward.

Concentration has knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be as its reward.

Knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be has disenchantment as its reward.

Disenchantment has dispassion as its reward.

Dispassion has knowledge & vision of release as its reward.

“In this way, skillful virtues lead step-by-step to the consummation of liberation.” - AN 11:1

All 3 Folds of the Virtue Division of the Path(Speech/Action/Livelihood) rest within a framework of Non-Affliction and abstaining from certain activities. In this way the Buddha defines virtue not as performing certain skillful actions but instead as avoiding unskillful ones as though they would be the death of our goodness, creating a simple yet strongly defined foundation for the practice to flourish from.

In the same way that right speech can be summed up with the principles of Truthfulness & Non-Affliction, Right Action can be distilled down into the principles of Heedfulness & Non-Affliction. realizing that behaving unskillfully creates huge blind spots in our awareness, we begin applying the principle of non-affliction to one's actions as well, reflecting before, during, and after an action to determine if it caused harm to ourselves or others.

understanding that some enjoyable actions tend to lead to favorable results down the road while others don't, and some unenjoyable actions tend to lead to unfavorable results while others don't. By reflecting on which is which and learning to avoid actions with unfavorable results we begin to invest in our practice and the path to peace starts to develop.

The Buddha singled out 3 actions in particular that always lead to unfavorable results: Killing, Stealing, and Illicit Sex. These actions directly correspond to the two big hindrances we struggle with in our practice (Sensory Passion & Ill Will) abstaining from them is a practical approach to overcoming the pull of the hindrances in our daily lives, often times it is helpful to take on additional personalized precepts that address areas where we notice we have difficulties with particular hindrances, similar to a New Year's resolution for the practice that we make each day.