

A. Skillfulness

I. Scientists and philosophers of the Buddha's day (page 22)

- A. argued a variety of views that implied purposeful action was pointless
 - i. events in the universe were totally chaotic or
 - ii. events in the universe were totally deterministic

II. The possibility of being able to master a skill (page 21)

- A. meant that the philosophers/scientists of the Buddha's day were wrong
 - i. in believing that purposeful action was futile
 - a) as purposeful action to develop a skill yields results
- B. was discerned by the Buddha as he watched the scientists/philosophers argue
 - a) as both sides implied that there was a skill in figuring out the truth
 - which the other side was failing to use
- C. is one of the more important entry points into the Buddha's teachings

III. Attention is required in 3 phases of mastering a skill: (page 22)

- A. attention to preexisting conditions before the skill is developed
- B. attention to one's actions in the present
- C. attention to the results of one's actions

IV. The “skill” taught by the Buddha

- A. relies on attention
- B. is manipulating kamma
 - i. first to make it better
 - ii. then to bring kamma to an end, also bringing rebirth to an end
 - a) rebirth and kamma are one

V. Intentions influence the results of actions (page 23)

- A. the intention to improve one's "skillfulness" leads to better results than
 - i. intentions motivated by
 - a) greed
 - b) aversion
 - c) delusion

VI. Intentions are influenced by attention to one's circumstances

- A. attention that is unclouded by delusion
 - i. leads to better perceptions about reality
 - a) which leads to better intentions
 - which leads to better actions, then better circumstances

VII. The most skillful form of attention (page 24)

- A. is attention to “Right View”
 - i. seeing The Four Noble Truths in all experiences[\$188]

VIII. The most skillful form of intention

- i. is the intention to engage in directed thought & evaluation (meditation)
 - a) with the intention of producing Right Concentration
 - the stillness of mental absorption [\$106]

IX. The most refined feelings & perceptions are: [D.9 \$164]

A. Skillfulness

- A. the feelings of equanimity
- B. the perceptions had in the highest states of concentration
- C. "jhana", mental absorption, Right Concentration

X. The Buddha used many metaphors relating to ordinary skills (p 25)

- A. to explain his teachings

XI. The Buddha used terms from ancient Indian music theory

- A. that he studied in his youth
- B. understanding terms from this music theory is helpful to understanding Buddhist teachings

XII. Ancient Indian music theory states that:

- A. the first step in performing is to tune the instrument
 - i. establish a base tone , "thana"
 - ii. then fine tune out, "penetrate" the remaining notes.
- B. the musician needs to pick up on the theme, the "nimitta" the essential message

XIII. Developing "skill" (page 26)

- A. is continued focused attention on the present moment
- B. is sensitivity to one's actions and results
- C. is the Buddha's path

XIV. The Buddha's teachings are the teachings of "skill" (p 27)

- A. focusing the mind on what is and isn't "skillful"
- B. learning to deal "skillfully" with unskillful states of mind
- C. learning to maximize "skillful" states of mind

XV. A "skillful" state of mind is a state of mind free of

- A. aversion
- B. delusion
- C. greed

XVI. Learning to know what is "skillful" [\$6, \$53] (page 28)

- A. is dependent on "appropriate attention" [\$1]
 - i. which is *in part* viewing one's thoughts and present circumstances
 - a) without partiality as the results
- B. is helped by associating with people [\$59, \$115]
 - i. people whose actions have long reflected a belief in kamma
 - ii. people of upright character
 - iii. people with lots of dhamma experience