

Training in Wisdom 5: Three Visions and 22 Indriyas

We can divide up the spectrum of experience in various ways. In this samsaric world, there is mostly the Impure Vision, the distorted world of suffering and impermanence and subjectivity. For those fortunate ones who have found a spiritual practice, this is intermixed with the Vision of Experience, the Vision of the Path, where the perspective has shifted, and one no longer looks for the permanent in what is intrinsically impermanent. Nor does one seek happiness in what is intrinsically suffering, purity in what is intrinsically impure, or a sense of self in impersonal forces and structures, which have no self. As these 4 “upside down views” are abandoned, one approaches the Pure Vision, which sees things as they really are.

If we consider the 22 “Indriyas”, the ‘functions’, ‘organs’, or ‘roots’, we find the first 13 items are associated with the Impure Vision. The first 5 of these are the 5 sense organs. The 6th organ is the dualistic mind, the vijnana indriya, which perceives thoughts and sense contacts.

Items 7 and 8 are Female Gender and Male Gender.

The next 5 have to do with the emotional nature and the Impure Vision:

9. Misery, Pain
10. Pleasure
11. Joyful Mind
12. Unhappy Mind
13. Indifference

The Vision of Experience transforms the ordinary samsaric perspective: we now see that things are impermanent and transient; devoid of any inherent nature of their own; and lacking in purity.

In the Vision of Experience, the Vision on the Path, one encounters the 5 Roots:

14. Faith
15. Vigor, Effort
16. Mindfulness
17. Concentration
18. Wisdom

‘The final or Pure Vision occurs when the practitioner has attained spiritual liberation, that is, Buddhahood. At this point his vision is no longer obscured by emotive habits, such as attachment and aversion or the ignorance that proceeds from the mistaken belief in subject and object. This direct perception of things as they are is called the “non-duality of clarity and emptiness.”’ (Deshung Rinpoche)

The next 3 items belong to the Pure Vision:

19. Will to know the unknown
20. What is unknown
21. Possessing all-knowingness

22. Life

There is also a Life organ/Life function. It has influence over the arising of a sentient being, and the length of life.

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