

Samsara & Nirvana

January 18, 2010

Homework - Class Two

Readings: *The Meaning of Life* pp. 33-56

Dis. Bud. Required Reading, pp. 15-20

Meditations/Contemplations:

Start each session off with basic prayers to get your mind on the right track and the 9-Rounds Breathing meditation.

Familiarize yourself with the Wheel, particularly the central axis and the six realms. If you are willing and courageous, the meditations on the six realms (done well) will generate a dread or fear of landing in that type of situation. Then contemplate the main causes for each realm and check in your mind to see how often you've planted those type potencies there. Make a strong determination to STOP creating the causes for that type of life (both now and the future). This is called **renunciation** which is simply having compassion for oneself – determining to be free of suffering.

Gods (devas) – arrogance, afflictive pride

Anti-Gods (asura, demigods, jealous-gods) – jealousy

Humans – attachment

Animals – stupidity

Hungry ghosts (pretas, wandering spirits) – miserliness, impoverished

Hell (narak) – hatred, anger

Post meditation session:

While going about your normal daily activities notice which realms (psychologically speaking) you are in or at least creating the causes to be in. If you have done the preceding meditations well, when, for example, anger/hatred arises in the mind you might reflect on the fact that you are not only destroying your present moment peace of mind but creating the causes for immense future suffering – it might even help to imagine yourself in a hellish situation NOW.

Making this connection will have the tendency to wake you up to destructive mental habits. Now that you have the opportunity to shift...shift and let the anger, greed, etc. go. You may need to use some analysis or reflect on the antidotes. For example, patience is the antidote to anger and loving kindness for hatred. Just that little bit of “letting go” is a taste of liberation. A little relaxation.

Interestingly, the more you practice and taste the benefits directly, the more confidence you have in the path...the stronger your Buddhist refuge becomes.