



Principles of Meditation: Contemporary Teaching of Fundamental Principles

The Dharma has been expressed in different languages, different cultures, and different times. In order to stay alive and remain vital, it has frequently taken a contemporary expression of its fundamental principles.

Recently, there has been a significant increase of interest in Buddhist meditation in Western culture, using the language of scientific experimentation. Contemporary research has shown that mindfulness based Buddhist meditation is effective in the treatment of pain management, can help to prevent the relapse of depression, improves immunological responses, and offers significant advantages over simple relaxation exercises. In addition, research involving 'established' meditators who can communicate more effectively in Western languages, has challenged our scientific expectations with respect to the limits and potential of attention, emotional robustness and plasticity, and harmonious human communication.

However, everyday notions of what meditation actually involves remain largely uninformed and speculative. To complement traditional sources that might not speak as effectively to students, a contemporary presentation of the basic principles of Buddhist meditation is introduced using a dynamic or 'ecological' model based on awareness, distraction, and letting go. This teaching model allows for a variety of perspectives within a single framework: ranging from the basic dynamic of the meditative process to the hollow nature of experience.

Biography: Dharmachari Ratnavyuha first discovered Buddhism while beginning a PhD in Economics. It was while using ecological models of interdependence, evolutionary metaphors of growth, and system dynamic modeling techniques within economic theory that he discovered a close link between such approaches and the Buddhist perspectives on the nature of reality and the refinement of consciousness. Applying what he believed to be accurate models for the objective world to the nature of his own experience, he decided to explore what Buddhist meditation had to offer, and he has been practicing Buddhism and meditation ever since. In 1996 after his dissertation was finished, he moved to Cambridge, UK to prepare for ordination within the Western Buddhist Order and work at Windhorse: Evolution (an ethical trading Buddhist right livelihood business). He was ordained in 1999 into the Western Buddhist Order and was part of the executive management team at Windhorse: Evolution for his last 3 years in Cambridge. He moved to Sydney in late 2004 and currently works at the Sydney Buddhist Centre, Newtown, teaching meditation and Buddhism.