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What do Buddhists consider Wisdom
Venerable Mahinda

Abridgement of Unibuds Dhamma talk given on Friday,
August 20th 1993 at the University of NSW.

Wisdom is a very important quality to possess. Wisdom is very clearly spelt out in the teachings of the Buddha, in the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path consists of 1 Right Understanding, 2 Right Thought, 3 Right Speech, 4 Right Action, 5 Right Livelihood, 6 Right Effort, 7 Right Mindfulness, and 8 Right Concentration.

Panna (wisdom) comprises Right Understanding and Right Thought. Right Understanding means to know and understand the Four Noble Truths.

Right Thought means to think three kinds of thoughts:

- Thoughts of renunciation or thoughts which do not have lustful desires.
- Thoughts of goodwill to others as opposed to thoughts of illwill.
- Thoughts of harmlessness as opposed to cruelty.

The Noble Eightfold Path can lead us to the end of suffering and all conflicts. However in order to get into this path it takes us a certain amount of wisdom.

Right understanding refers to our understanding of fundamental truths about life and the world around us. We should try to understand two laws; the Four Noble Truths and the law of cause and effect - karma. This is very basic and fundamental to Buddhism.

Every action has a reaction just like Newton's 3rd law of motion. Karma has both physical and moral effects. Good begets good and evil begets evil. A good doer experiences evil as long as the good karma ripens not. There are people who indulge in wrong things and appear to have good lives. The results of their actions will come back to them sooner or later. Also those who perform unwholesome or bad actions are reborn in unfortunate states.

When you practice with a higher, more peaceful state of mind, your higher understanding of karma allows you to transcend worldly existence. You must train your minds. For example, you hear me now, the vibration of my voice box - this is the cause. The sound hits your eardrum... The process of hearing involves so many individual causes and effects. If you understand this, that when causes arise, effects also arise, your wisdom for responding to other events in your life will improve.

We must understand dhukka. Dhukka is suffering, or unsatisfactoriness. Associating with people or conditions or unfulfilled desires, subjects you don't like, people you don't enjoy, is dhukka. For example, how long can you laugh? One day? Two? Three? Even laughter is dhukka. You cannot maintain your laughter.

The Five grasping Aggregates are also dhukka. These five characteristics of self-awareness are; 1 Physical form which has given rise to the body, 2 Feelings and sensations, 3 Perception, 4 Mental formations, thoughts and imagination, and 5 Consciousness.

If you don't grasp the aggregates, they come and go. If you grasp the aggregates, that is, if you grab your thoughts, objects and you think it is real, it will condition some emotions in you. Then you will attach yourself to the feelings/emotions you have generated to

the sensations/object you have grasped. After you have attached yourself to something and you lose it, you get very upset.

To overcome suffering you need to overcome your craving. You should follow the Noble Eightfold Path and try to always see things as they are.

minerals. Whether you are Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim, this change will happen to you!

The truth of existence is that everything is changing. Anything that is changing is dhukka. Is your body yours? Can you keep your body? Your hair, which you love so much keeps falling out. Also your nails, your teeth, your skin... They are all dying cells, but you cling to them, cling to your eyebrows, and you give them pastel.

Delusion is looking in the mirror and thinking you can keep your beautiful looks. The body is made up of elements. When you die and they put you in a box, your body will be reduced to carbon and perhaps a few

But wisdom is not the pure accumulation of knowledge and theories. These dhamma talks you attend I hope will help compliment your university studies. Tell me which Faculty teaches you how to overcome your craving ? Which Faculty helps you overcome your anger ? Everytime you radiate thoughts of loving kindness to all sentient beings, you are building your wisdom. Your compassion helps others, removes their fears, and anxieties and gives them confidence. I hope you have all gained some wisdom this evening !

Abridgement of Dhamma talk given on Friday, August 20th 1993 at the UNSW as reported by Mick Kiddle.