

The Factors of the Wise Man in the concepts of Theravāda Buddhism

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Abstract

The objective of this text is to study of “The factors of wise man in Theravāda Buddhism”. This is aimed (1) To study the factor of wise man in the concepts of Theravāda Buddhism, (2) To analyze the concept of factors of wise man in Theravāda Buddhism.

In this text, the four factors: Su, Ci, Pu and Li are basic root to develop the man to become the wise man in the perspectives of worldly knowledge. Su is abbreviated from sutta means listening or learning which make the learned man. Ci is abbreviated from cinta means thinking which makes the thoughtful man. Pu is abbreviated from pucha means asking or inquiring which makes considered man. And Li is abbreviated from likhita means taking note which makes memorable man. Thus su, ci, pu and li (listening, thinking, asking and taking note) are basis root of wise man.

The factors of wise man are to create the knowledge of the man is considered as scholar or wise man who is full of the worldly knowledge for solving the problems of life and living happily. So the factors of wise man is creating of wisdom for man to solve the problems of life and finding the real happiness.

Keyword : The factors of the Wise Man: Su, Ci, Pu and Li

Introduction

The study of the factors of wise man in the concepts of Buddhist Buddhism refers to study the four factors (1) Su, listen, (2) Ci, think,(3) Pu, inquire and (4) Li, take note. The researcher will study the meaning, definition, process, characteristics and other special points related to the concepts of Theravāda Buddhism and scholars.

Definition of worldly wise man: A wise man (Pesala, 2013-5) in the worldly sense is one who has knowledge of worldly subjects or things and finished an education with a high degree of study. A worldly wise man is called Dr. according to the Thai Tradition; someone is always called as such who finishes doctorate degree according to the system of education of that country. In Thailand, when someone finished with doctorate level called (Dr.), that would be the equivalent for the abbreviation for Doctor, Dr. Sometimes they are called *Bandita* according to the tradition of Theravāda Buddhist countries because the word *Bandita* refers to whom who has knowledge and be considered when someone have finishes with a doctorate degree that this person has high knowledge in a worldly sense, so he should be called *Bandita*. This word *Bandita* (Nath, 1986-543) is popular and combined with other important words to demonstrate a high level study; for instance in Thai educational system at college or university the levels of study are called bachelor degree is *Buddhasatrabandita*, master degree is *Buddhasatramahabandita*, and doctorate degree is *Buddhasatradusadibandita*.

According to Cambodian educational system when someone finished a doctorate degree of study called *Bandita*, it is always put to get with the subject of study such as “*Bandita dhasanaviya* (Doctor of Philosophy), *Banditanayobay* (Doctor of Social science), *Banditasethakic* (Doctor of Economics) and so on. It is rare to call doctor or Dr. in Khmer tradition (Nath, 1986-544).

This is very different from the Dhamma concept of Wise Man according to Theravāda Buddhist Philosophy. The wise man in the worldly sense refers to the one who finished with PhD. degree, graduated PhD. Degrees, such as graduated BA., MA, or PhD, by understanding of worldly concept,. That is called *Bandita* (the wise man who is confirmed by certificate of BA., MA, or PhD).

Due to the promise of modern time, one has achieved a high degree like (Doctorate), (Docteur) in subjects such as: Law Doctor, Medical Doctor, Scientific Doctor, Literature Doctor, and so on, Characteristic of wise man, understanding of world concept, wise man refers to the one who finished PhD. degree, graduated PhD. Degrees, such as graduated BA., MA, or PhD is called *Paṇḍita*, a wise man (Nath, 1986).

Definition of the Dhamma Wise Man

Paṇḍita, derived from the Pali word, commonly is used in Theravāda Buddhist countries to describe the one who has wisdom. The one who practice regularly the ten wholesome or forty wholesome is called wise man in the term of good deeds and justice. In general, it refers to someone who has deep knowledge and intelligence. When someone disrobed from monkhood, the person is always called *Paṇḍita* (According to Khmer tradition, when someone disrobe from monkhood, they always called Pandita because they think that that person used to be a monk, practice good deed and learn the teachings of Buddha) because Buddhist people think that as the person used to be a monk, he would have practiced good deeds and learned the Dhamma-Vinaya of the Buddha.

According to The Maṅgala Sutta Conversely, the Wise Men are those who observe basic morality carefully. The wise (means wise man) cultivates wholesome deeds such as charity, morality, meditation, reverence, service, learning the Dhamma, all kinds of good deeds, and they hold right views. Wise friends restrain their friends from doing evil and urge them to do the good (Pesala, An Exposition of The Maṅgala Sutta, 2013-5) (physical, verbal and mental wholesome). Therefore, in Buddhism, *Paṇḍita* is the one who does the good with body, speech and mind with depending on his *Paññā*: wisdom. This *Paññā*, wisdom or insight knowledge *can* be cultivated by their original sources.

In Dhamapada scripture, verse 63 says about the characteristic as to be wise person or to be a foolish person following,

*“Conceiving so his foolishness the fool is thereby wise,
while ‘fool’ is called that fool conceited that he’s wise”.*

This verse explains that if a foolish person were to become aware that he is foolish, by virtue of that awareness, he could be described as a wise person. On the other hand, if a foolish person were to think that he is wise, he could be described as a foolish person.

In verse 64 it is said about the ignorant who cannot benefit from the wise:

*“Though all through life the fool might wait upon the wise,
no more Dhamma can he sense than a spoon the taste of soup”.*

It mean that the fool, even if this person kept the company of a wise person intimately over a life-time, will not become aware of the nature of experience, just as a spoon will not know the taste of soup.

In the verse 65 says about profit from the wise:

*“Though briefly one intelligent might wait upon the wise,
quickly Dhamma he can sense as tongue the taste of soup”.*

This stanza means that if a wise man were to associate with a wise man, even for a moment, he will quickly understand the teaching. This is very much like the tongue being able to discern the subtle flavours of soup. This verse could be further appreciated when we contrast it with the previous one. In the previous one the image used is the spoon. Though it serves tasty food endlessly, it just cannot appreciate how food tastes, very much like a foolish individual being unable to appreciate the teaching even when he keeps company with the wise. An intelligent man, even though this person is associated with a wise man only for a moment, quickly understands the Dhamma, just as the tongue knows the taste of soup (The Treasury of the Truth,).

Well associated with the wise are those who observe basic morality carefully, cultivate wholesome deeds such as charity, morality, meditation, reverence, service, learning the Dhamma, etc., and they hold right views and restrain own friends from evil and urge them to do good.

Factor of Worldly Wise Man

Factors of wise man refer to the four factors that derive from Pāli words and are abbreviated as short form, namely: (1) *su*, *suta*: listen, (2) *ci*, *cinta*: think, (3) *pu*, *puchā*: inquire and (4) *li*, *likhita*: take note. *Su*, *ci*, *pu* and *li* is acronym from Pāli words, translate to the words “to listen, think, inquire and take note, written on school certificates” (Nath, 1986-1370).

To become a wise man, it depends on factors neither worldly *Paṇḍita*, nor *Dhamma Pandita*. The four factors of the wise man are the basis roots: *su* (listen), *ci* (think), *pu* (ask) and *li* (take note) to help to develop and to become a wise man. The meaning of the four factors of the worldly wise man is as follows:

1. *Su* is abbreviated from the Pāli word *Sutta* that means listening or making a learned man.
2. *Ci* is abbreviated from the Pāli word *Cinta* and means thinking or making a thought man.
3. *Pu* is abbreviated from the Pāli word *Pucha*, asking, or inquiring, make a considered man.

4. And *li* is abbreviated from the Pāli word *Likhita* that means taking note or making memorable man.

Buddhist scholars compose the verse for teaching the generation that without the four factors, one cannot become a wise man, as a Pāli proverb said “*su ci pu li vinimutto katham so buditto bhavē*” and is translated “one who avoids *su*, *ci*, *pu* and *li*, how can person become a wise man?” Sometimes four factors; *su*, *ci*, *pu* and *li* are called the factors of learners because they make learners and know the subjects of knowledge, what is unclear and then take note of what is clear knowledge, professional and benefit for feeding life (Bertrand, 1979-70). On the other hand, the learned man, erudite or scholar (Pāli: *bahusacca* or *bahusutta*) is one who has a lot of listening and learning knowledge and has many experiences, both mundane and Dhamma knowledge, studied a lot, “The heart of scholar”. *Bahusutta* arises by *su* (listen), *ci* (think), *pu* (ask) and *li* (take note), because the four factors of the wise man are of important factors to become a *Bahusutta*. Without these factors one cannot be a *Bahusutta*. Thus *Su*, *Ci*, *Pu*, *Li* are basis root of *Paṇḍita* (wise man) as well as *Bahusutta* (the heart of scholar).

Characteristic of worldly *paññā* or worldly knowledge is that it depend on the educational systems and the own experiences when facing life. It comes from learning at school, institutions, colleges or universities that confirmed by test. The one who has accumulated a lot of knowledge is considered a *Paṇḍita*, it refers to high degree subjects like subjects of Doctorate degree. The worldly knowledge can be explicit both with practical skills or implicit or explicit as with the theoretical understanding of a subject. On the other hand, worldly knowledge can be the knowledge of life that local people learn and practice by their ancestors until it is becomes the way of their life. This we can call cultural knowledge. Therefore, worldly knowledge can be divided into two kinds: educational knowledge and cultural knowledge.

Su, listen

According to the *Sataniti* scriptures (សត្តន្តីតិ), one of the four factors of Wise Man are the basis root: *su* (listen). *Su* is abbreviated from the Pāli word *Sutta* which means listening or making a learned man. *Su* refers to listening and learning from others. Listening from parents, teachers, monks and other people who lead a good way (in a good direction) is considered a factor of Wise Man. Otherwise, listening and learning from others is not always good due to their way of living, what we meet is both the good and

bad, therefore what we listen to is in the same way. Su implies hearing and learning but it depends on the consideration of the mind what is good and what is bad, what we should take and what we should avoid. Theravada Buddhism states clearly about how to listen to get merit and become a wise man depending on listening and learning by (*Yonisomanasikāra*): reasoned attention; systematic attention; analytical thinking; (critical reflection; thinking in term of specific conditionality; thinking by way of causal relations or by way of problem-solving or internal factor; personal factor and a factor belonging to the category of insight or wisdom) (Payutto), 2011-57). Priests also play a key role in local leadership, helping to promote the quality of life of rural people. Both the material and the moral because the monks are closer to the villagers. (Phramahachumporn wannaphap, 2015 : 39-49)

Su is related to this good result or merit of preaching and listening to Dhamma: Giving of the Dhamma or teaching Dhamma to others, writing of scriptures as palm leaves, all kinds of Dhammma books leading in good direction. This is plentiful gift that yields enormous results. The Buddha taught that “*sabadānam dhamadānam Jinati*” the Dhamma gift excels all other gifts. It has many more merits than giving things such as material gifts or help of bodily support. For giving of Dhamma or teaching of Dhamma is the gift of mental support that can help audiences, listeners and readers in five different kinds of good results: “These are the five rewards in listening to the Dhamma”. There are these five rewards in listening to the Dhamma (Pin-89). These are:

1. *Asuttam sunāti*: one hears what has not heard before.
2. *Suttam pariyodhabeti*: one clarifies what has heard before.
3. *Kangkham vihanti*: one gets rid of doubt.
4. *Thidthag ujaum karoti*: one's views are made straight.
5. *Cittamassa basidati*: one's mind grows serene.

Give a sermon or teaching Dhamma is not easy because the Buddha's teachings have a deep meaning. One, who tries to listen, tries to learn for long time and in depth that one can know and understand clearly and thereafter he can preach teaches or give the Dhamma or sermon clearly. When a person listens, learns to know and remember, s/he will get excellent results then bring what they know to share with others, it will result in more and more benefits and serve as extremely valuable donation.

Otherwise the donation of Dhamma brings much more good results than giving all kinds of gifts because the Dhamma gift in supporting

Buddhism to stay alive long life. Because the cause make Buddhism develop five kinds (Pin-89):

1. Lay people listen to Dhamma-vinaya respectful,
2. Lay people learn about Dhamma-vinaya respectful,
3. Lay people take note of Dhamma-vinaya respectful,
4. Lay people consider to have a clear understanding Dhamma-vinaya

respect, and

5. Lay people know well and practice Dhamma-vinaya respectfully.

Giving sermon is considered to support Buddhism in the world to help people to life happily. That is why we consider a Dhamma gift to excel all other kinds of gifts (AN.I.-90). According to Dikhanikaya, Parinibana Sutta had divided into two gifts as the following: 1) giving material things, and 2) giving Dhamma(AN.I.-90).

Giving things such as cloths, foods, residence and medicine and such is called Āmisabūja. Giving of explaining Dhamma to lay people to understand correctly by following Buddha's teachings, and thus developing of Buddhism is called Dhamma būja. Dhamma Dāna (the gift of Dhamma) accounted to Dhamma būja (Dhamma practice) is the gift with many merits.

In the *paramathajotika scripture*, *Athakathakhutaka nikāya*, *Khutakanibath* the parable is that Buddha is considered the demonstrator, Dhamma is considered the road, and Sangha (monks) considered travelers on the road with Buddha's demonstration).

In other meaning, the preacher who have listen and learn the teaching of Buddha by the Buddhist canon such as Tipitaka and so on then raise Buddha's teachings to preach, teach, share or publish for the others is also called the demonstrator. The Dhamma is brought by the demonstrator called the road (path). The followers who listen to the preacher are called the truly travelers along the way with the teachings of the Buddha.

The preacher is considered as telling the way, the Dhamma(Pin-89) taught is called the way, the listeners and followers of the teachings of the Buddha are call traveler. From listening to a preacher and practicing Buddha's teachings can make release suffering and reach Nibbana. This is why the preacher gets many merits or extremely good results.

On the other hand, all Buddhist people who know about the religious activities in Buddhism such as charity, keeping the precept, doing meditation

or mental development and have giving charity, observe the precepts and practice meditation that causes to be happy in this and the next life depending on having listened from a preacher and having learnt, read from the scriptures like the palm scriptures, Krang and Dhamma books that ancestors, donators made and kept for generations to read and learn in order to for spiritual well-being.

Ci (think)

Ci is one of four factors in order to become a wise man (Nath, 1986-1370), neither depending on factors worldly *Paṇḍita*, nor *Dhamma Pandita*. According to *Sataniti* scriptures, the factors of the Wise Man are the basis roots: *ci (think)*, *ci* is abbreviated from Pāli word *Cinta* which means thinking or making a thoughtful man (Nath, 1986-1372). The nature of mind is thinking. Mind has the duty to think, so thought is a mental process inside our mind. Stating from touching an outside object with the mind is individual and mental consciousness will wise that makes the mind think. In common sense, *ci (think)* means when we have listened, learned, met, worked or doing whatever, we will think about it. *Ci (think)* can depend on *su* (to listen or learn) which means whatever we are listening to or learning comes into mind, and the mind will have to think in order to create an understanding of the matter. When the mind is thinking these will always arise some from of questioning so it involves the process of *pu* (asking) in order to create a clever understanding.

Ci is the knowledge obtained from one's own thinking, not just from hearing others. It is the knowing of difficulties and problems, from what one has grasped by the means of one's own intellect. It is the process of intellectually analyzing something to see whether it is logical and rational. Having gone through such a process, one can then accept a teaching intellectually. One may thereby be knowledgeable about the theory of the world, and may be able to explain it to others.

Thus *ci (think)* is considered that need to depend on *pu* (to inquire or ask) make which is to ask questions before understanding the characteristics of right thought. When the mind is working there is always an element of inquiring the process of *pu* (asking) to reach a clear understanding. This is one of the four factors of Wise man.

***Pu*, to inquire**

The third factor of Wise Man depend on factors neither worldly *Paṇḍita*, nor *Dhamma Paṇḍita*, is *pu* (ask) to develop a man to become a Wise Man. *Pu* is abbreviated from the Pali word *Pucha*, asking, or inquiring.

Thinking can be unclear, therefore one must ask. When we learn or listen to something, sometimes can we understand what it is? To make sure we have to ask. (Bertrand Russell, 1979-70) It is quite a common experience that, when we were a child, went to school, the teacher taught us have to write a letter, but we could not write at all although the teacher taught us frequently. So then we had to ask the teacher how to write and remember the ways of writing. This is the process of getting knowledge by asking.

We get knowledge by asking questions, and even if these are not answered, we get knowledgeable, for a well-packed question carries its answer on its back as a snail carries its shell. Asking or inquiring questions is what brains were born to do, at least when we were children. For children, quite literally, seeking explanations is as deeply rooted a drive as seeking food or water.

In the field of philosophy, knowing purely by thinking: When philosophers ask about the possibility of some knowledge being gained purely by thinking by reflection rather than observation, they are wondering whether a priori knowledge is possible (Sayadaw, 2008-12). They who believe that some such knowledge is possible are called rationalists for observational knowledge. This section mentions a few of the multitude of questions that have arisen about *a priori* knowledge - knowledge which would be present, if it ever is, purely by thinking, maybe through an accompanying rational insight.

Thus as a factor of Wise Man, *Pu* is asking, or inquiring, the process of getting knowledge by asking (Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 1976-65).

***Li*, to take note**

Li is the last one of the four factors of the Wise Man and abbreviated from the Pāli word *Likhita* that means taking note. *Li*, to take note, is the practice of recording information captured from another source. *Li*, to take note is the hegemonic learned activity at school, institute, university or educational place and, in many cases, the main ground for educational interaction between teacher and students(Nath-1370),. This observation has

given rise to an increasing interest in studying students' Li and its impact on learning. It is related to some cognitive variables (attention, memory, comprehension, and more); the relationship between quality of notes and the significance of learning; and the changes in the teaching methodology which may enhance Li (take note). However, the consideration of notes as a symbolic mediator which in certain educational conditions may promote knowledge construction and transformation and, ultimately, cognitive change has received much less attention (Students' Note-Taking as a Knowledge-Construction Tool-17).

Li means to take note by study materials, books, pens, computer, phone (modern time) and remembering. But in Theravada Buddhism, to take note means *Yoniso Manasikara*, wise attention that is an important point in Buddhist practice.

With (*ayoniso manasikāra*) unwise attention, one does not direct attention to the core or essence of a matter or phenomenon in order to understand its true nature but rather directs attention away from them. As a result, one may regard what is impermanent as permanent, what is unsatisfactory as satisfactory, what is not self as self and what is foul as beautiful. These four wrong perceptions are known as the four perversions (*vipallasa*).

It is to agreeable or pleasant objects received through the six senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind that can give rise to the unwholesome factor of greed while unwise attention to unattractive or unpleasant objects received through the six sense doors can give rise to the unwholesome factor of aversion. The *ayoniso manasikāra* unwise attention itself can lead to delusion. On the other hand, it will lead to the elimination of greed, aversion and delusion. It will also lead to elimination of the five mental hindrances and development of the seven factors of enlightenment.

Ayonisomanasikara will help one concentration and mindfulness practices in a balanced manner, to attain Right View (*Sammā Ditthi*) and to progress through the rest of the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path towards Nibbāna (MN. I. 61; M. III. 251).

Conclusion

Buddhist scholars said that if someone has practice without the four factors, one cannot become a wise man as a Pali proverb said "*su ci pu li vinimutto katham so buditto bhavē*" meaning the one who avoids *su, ci, pu* and

li, how can this person become a wise man (Russell, Outline of Philosophy, 1979-70)? On the other hand, the one who has a lot of listening or learning comprehension, great learning experiences, very knowledgeable experiences, having studied a lot is called “The Heart of scholar”. *Bahusutta* arise by *su* (listen), *ci* (think), *pu* (ask) and *li* (take note), without these factors one cannot be become a *Bahusutta*. Thus *Su*, *Ci*, *Pu*, *Li* are the basis root of Wise Man.

Thus the discussion above, the factors of Wise Man in a worldly concept and Theravada Buddhism is related to the Philosophical link of the learn and man and knowledge all man because the factors of Wise Man make the man knowledgeable in present day life or being considered as a scholar or wise man in the concept of worldly knowledge.

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