

Characteristics of Wise Man with Reference to Pāli Literature

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Abstract

The wisdom is the important thing for the improvement of human beings. That wisdom has ability to create the inferior and superior life of human beings. Besides, wisdom is important not only for the mundane things but also for the supramundane things. This paper is mentioned about the definition of the wise man, the attitude of wise man and his behavior have been mentioned in detail. Besides, it pointed out with reference to the *Pāli* Literature that one who associates with the wise man can enjoy the benefits and happiness.

Keywords: Wisdom, wise man, human beings, attitude, behavior

Introduction

The wisdom is included in the important role for the attainment of *Nibbāna* which is the liberation from the round of birth and death. One who has sharp and keen knowledge is able to serve to accomplish in any things concerned with mundane and supramundane. A wise man is a person who is full of wisdom. The attitude of wise is great and noble, and one who associates with the wise man can enjoy the benefits and happiness.

The definition of a Wise Man

It is found that the definition of wise man is explained in the various treaties as follows.

- A person having wisdom¹
- One who completes with general knowledge and who is capable of discrimination the meaning of good from that of bad²
- One who has no arrogant or conceit although he has full of great wealth, better education and great benefit³
- They never long for the things that should not be gotten; they never worry for those things that are lost; they never confuse when his wealth are lost⁴
- One who makes to be free from danger⁵; they go with the gait of knowledge of benefits here and now and in the life to come⁶
- One who thinks right though, speaks right words and does good deeds⁷
- One who serves for the benefits of all in the world of sentient beings such as for the benefits of oneself, for the benefits of others and for the benefits of both⁸

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¹ Tipimyan dhan, 534

² Myandhan, 3.3

³ *elwph; pLUsrt?71/*

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Dhp, 50 Dhp, A, II, 242

⁶ Dhp, A, II, 122

⁷ AN, I, 100-101

⁸ AN, I, 498-9

- One who can gain the benefits due to reasoning with knowledge⁹
- One who realizes the appearing and disappearing of five aggregates¹⁰
- One who skillfully and cleverly knows these for phenomena such as object (*āyatana*), element (*dhātu*), the Law of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) and in causal occasion and what is not causal occasion or possible and impossible (*thānāthāna*).¹¹
- One who abstains from non-beneficial things and serves for beneficial things; one who knows both of these¹²
- One who is endowed with three things should be known as a wise person regarding his wrong doing as such; when regarding his wrong doing as such, remedying it in accordance with what is proper; and when another person comes and admits his own wrong doing, accepting it in accordance with what is proper¹³
- One who is patient or one who has no anger¹⁴
- One who realizes the Four Noble Truths¹⁵
- The wise cannot be trembled by any praises or blames¹⁶

In this way, it is found that the definition of wise man is variously explained. As above mentioned, concisely, one's attitude, word and act discriminate him what he is. Therefore, blameless deeds, blameless speech and blameless thoughts are criteria to specify a wise man. Moreover, it is observed that from the point of view of supramundane, the wise man has to realize the Four Noble Truths and try to attain *Nibbāna*.

Characteristics of Wise Man

The wise and the characteristics of wise are connected each other. The wise man means one who fulfills or complete with the characteristics of wise man. So, the wise man and the characteristics of wise are the same. Concerning the characteristics of wise, it is variously explained in the *pāḷi* literature as follows.

- Those who are wise have less the dust of defilements¹⁷
- Those who complete with knowledge which can discern the appearing and disappearing of five aggregates¹⁸
- Regarding his wrong doing as such; when regarding his wrong doing as such, remedying it in accordance with what is proper¹⁹
- One who acknowledge One's gratitude to those who have ever helped oneself.
Having acknowledge thus, reciprocation by any means, verbal or physical
- Fulfillment with patient and absence of anger²⁰

⁹ J, A, III, 95

¹⁰ MN, II, 19. SN, III, 173-174

¹¹ MN, III, 107. MN, A, IV, 56. SN, A, I, 100

¹² AN, I, 355

¹³ Ibid, 61

¹⁴ J, A, IV, 313

¹⁵ MN, III, 366

¹⁶ Dh, 25. Dh, A, I, 372

¹⁷ Patis, 116

¹⁸ DN, A, II, 120

¹⁹ AN, I, 61

Besides the above mentioned characteristics, the wise practices as a drum. When the wise speaks, he always mindfully tells that they do listen to his words or not. Moreover, he will never answer without asking him. If they ask him a question, he speaks the truth and benefit without any hesitation just like the loud sound appears from the drum when it is struck. In this regard, in the treaty of *lokanīti*, it is written as follows.

" The wise man stands like a drum if there is no question for him. If there is a question to solve, he is like the heavy rain. However, the foolish speaks a lot whether asking or not."
(Verse-12)

Therefore, practicing like a drum is one sort of characteristics of wise man. The secrecy is another characteristic of wise man.

A sense of gratitude is a prominent characteristic having in the wise. With respect to this, the clear figure of a wise man is brought out by these examples Ven. *Sāriputta Thera* became a stream-enterer when he heard a brief *dhama* from Ven. *Assaji Thera*. Although he becomes an Arahant and was assigned the title of the most excellence in wisdom by the Buddha, he always remembered the benefit of his teacher, Ven, *Assaji*. So, wherever he arrived at, he always paid homage to and lay by placing his head directing toward the place where his teacher lived. In this way, Ven.*Sāriputta Thera* always paid respect to his teacher. That is why, the Buddha said thus..

" The *dhamma* taught by the Buddha is realized from such teacher. Such teacher should be respectfully paid homage just like a Brahma pays respect to the fire which is sacrificed."²¹

By drawing inference from this verse, the wise man always remembers the benefactor to whom they owe a debt of gratitude which must be paid for and he always worships his benefactor.

Not only acknowledging one's gratitude to their benefactors but also reciprocating by some means is also the characteristic of wise man. Ven.*Sāriputta Thera* is the top most one among those who have paid for their debt of gratitude. A *Brahmaṇa* named *Rādha* offered Ven. *Sāriputta Thera* a spoonful of alms food. Having acknowledged his gratitude to that *Brahmaṇa* . *Thera* wanted to reciprocate his. As a result, *Thera* ordained the *Brahmaṇa* and then, that *Brahmaṇa* became Arahant after attaining the monkhood.²²

Therefore, it can be apparently seen that the wise man cannot forget the things which is favored him and he reciprocates a debt of gratitude at the suitable time and condition. It is noted that above mentioned characteristics are nature and marks of wise man.

Attitude of Wise Man

²⁰ J, A, IV, 313

²¹ Dhṛp, A, II, 401

²² J, I, 38. J, A, II, 21. Dhṛp, A, I, 346

Those having wisdom; those who are polite in their verbal action, bodily action and mental action; those who serve for the benefits of oneself, benefits of others and benefit of the world are called wise men so that their temperament is said to be imitate, respectful and emulate. The temperament of wise men are-

1. One who is ready to accept other admonishment
2. One who knows moderation in having edible things
3. One who has full of mindfulness, effort and wisdom
4. Without laziness, one who practice in active
5. One who frightens such as conception which is fearful
6. As he is fearful such phenomena, he practices the *dhamma* righteously.²³

As mentioned above, the wise men have attitude to accept easily other admonishment and to mend his ways when someone admonishes him by pointing out some fault or defectiveness and to do what is required. Moreover, without laziness, the wise man performs the manifold tasks that have to do industriously with diligence and effort.

Behavior of Wise Man

With reference to the act, the wise men well act or conduct or control or keep their bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions. In the *cintīsatt Anguttaranikāya*,²⁴ it is written three kinds of marks or behavior of wise men. They are

1. *Sucintātacintī* (thinking right thought or good thought)
2. *Subhāsitaḥāsī* (speaking right speech or good speech)
3. *Sukata kammakārī* (performing good deeds)

The Buddha preached that speaking good speech is one of the unique manners of wise men. When they speak, their manners are full of polite and gentleness due to speaking the right and beneficial words and speaking with loving kindness. Moreover, the wise men speak only the profound speech, good speech and gentle speech.

The last fact that is performing good deed means acting by abstinence from three kinds of evil body actions included in the ten profitable course of action. It means that wise man acts by abstinence from killing; by abstinence from taking what is not given by abstinence from sexual misconduct.

In this way, abstaining from evil deeds and cultivating the good deeds is also the manner of righteous persons.

²³ Vism, I, 103

²⁴ AN, I, 100-101

Advantages of Association with Wise Man

One who wants to gain benefit and happiness must associate with wise and virtuous person. The Buddha preached the advantages of association with wise and virtuous person in the *Sabbhisutta* of *Saṃyuttanikāy*²⁵ as follows;

1. One becomes noble person due to associating with wise and virtuous person
2. Acquiring development of wisdom
3. Free from the sorrow and grief
4. Living elegantly amidst one's relations
5. Getting good destination such as human existence or deva (deity) existence which are full of wealth and happiness
6. Long permanence of their amassed wealth
7. Attaining the *nibbāna* which is free from all kinds of suffering.

Attaining the *Nibbāna* bliss

Associating with wise and virtuous person can attain the most excellence advantage i.e. *nibbāna* bliss which is free from or cessation from all kinds of suffering. Concerning this fact, it is obvious evident through the Buddha's words thus--

" One should associate with good; with the good one should foster intimacy. Having learned the true *dhamma* of the good, one is released from all sufferings."²⁶

Therefore, as association with the wise and virtuous person can produce the ultimate benefit that is peaceful *nibbāna*, those who want to gain the excellent benefit must associate with the wise and virtuous person.

Viewing the above mentioned facts, it can be known that one can enjoy benefits and happiness not only in this very life but also in the next life due to association with wise and virtuous person. Moreover, one can attain *nibbāna*. So, those who wish to enjoy the benefits and happiness not only in this very life but also in the next life should associate with wise and virtuous person.

Conclusion

With respect to the above mentioned facts, the wise man is a person who can discriminate the right from the wrong and full of knowledge and wisdom. It can be obviously seen that a wise man is a person who have polite and gentle manner in the verbal action, bodily action and mental action; one who serves for the benefits of all in the world of sentient beings such as for the benefits of oneself, for the benefits of others and for the benefits of both, and he abstains from disadvantages ; when another person comes and admits his own wrong doing, accepting it in accordance with what is proper; one who is patient or one who has no anger; one who realizes the Four Noble Truths; the wise cannot be trembled by any praises or blames. It is found that a wise man is a person who has less the dust of defilements; regarding

²⁵ SN, I, 16-17

²⁶ Ibid

his wrong doing as such; when regarding his wrong doing as such, remedying it in accordance with what is proper; one who acknowledge One's gratitude to those who have ever helped oneself, having acknowledge thus, reciprocation by any means, verbal or physical. Not only the attitude of such kind of wise person but also his bodily manner, verbal manner, and mental manner are right and good. So those who associate with wise man can enjoy not only mundane benefits and happiness such as nobleness; development of wisdom; free from the sorrow and grief; living elegantly amidst one's relations; long permanence of their amassed wealth but also the supramundane benefits and happiness such as getting good destination such as human existence or deve (deity) existence which are full of wealth and happiness and attaining the *nibbāna* which is free from all kinds of suffering.

Therefore, it is believed that in our community, not only association with wise and virtuous person but also trying oneself to become wise and virtuous person can establish the calm and peaceful human society.

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