

Early Buddhism 5: Wisdom



The depth of knowing

- Data
- Information
- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Wisdom

Wisdom: a working definition

- An act of understanding that generalizes from immediate experience to encompass the whole of what is possible.

The function of wisdom

Wisdom is not of value in itself, but because it is the key to liberation.

- Ethics → Meditation → Wisdom → Freedom

KEEP THAT
YOUNG, HEALTHY LOOK!

Join
Burgess Meredith

IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S
FOREMOST CLUBS

*As man's youth has gotten longer,
by decades, more and more men are
taking a YOUNG man's
care of their appearance
—more and more men
are joining the Aqua
Buddha Club!*

*This circulation rouser
brightens and braces your
skin after shaving, gives
that young, healthy skin-freshness
everyone enjoys looking at. Try it!*



*A few of the members: Lauritz Melchior, Norman
Rockwell, Lucius Beebe, Maj. George Fielding Eliot*

Burgess Meredith, distinguished actor and
member of the Aqua Buddha Club.



Three kinds of wisdom

The commentaries describe three stages in the development of wisdom:

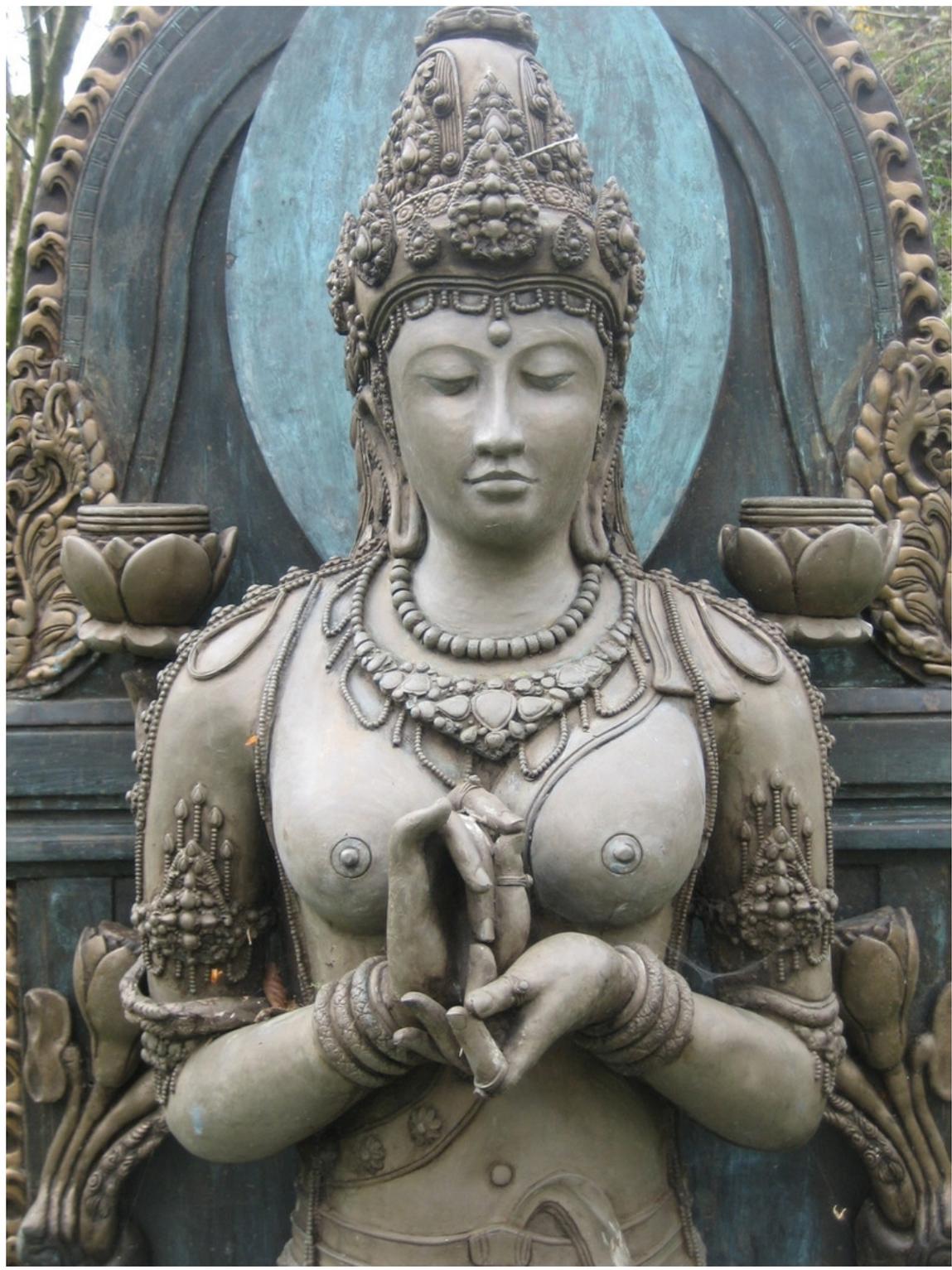
1. Understanding the known (*ñātapariññā*)
2. Understanding by scrutiny (*tīraṇapariññā*)
3. Understanding by letting go (*pahānapariññā*)

Ultimate vs. conventional: a false dichotomy

- Conventional reality (people, names, trees...)
- Ultimate reality (consciousness, feeling, contact)
- This distinction not found in the suttas.
- For the suttas, all truth is conventional, except nibbana.

Another approach, from Vasubandhu

- *Parikalpita*: the imaginary
- *Paratantrika*: the interdependent
- *Pariniṣpanna*: the perfected



Stages of wisdom

- Listening/learning (*bahussuta*)
- Reflecting (*pātisaṅkhā*)
- Discussing (*sakkacca*)
- Applying to experience (*yoniso manasikāra*)
- Clear discernment (*vipassanā*)
- Knowing reality (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*)
- Knowing the end of affliction (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*)
- Reviewing (*paccavekkaṇa*)

Words for wisdom

- *Paññā*—wisdom/understanding
- *Ñāṇa*—knowledge
- *Pariññā*—full knowledge
- *Aññā*—final knowledge
- *Dassana*—vision
- *Medha*—wisdom
- *Vijjā*—true knowledge/realization

How does wisdom work?

- Wisdom is not a special faculty, but is the developed form of ordinary understanding.
- All understanding is an unpredictable knowing that arises mysteriously; in other words, all understanding is intuition.
- The information is processed, largely unconsciously, and arrives more or less whole.

How does wisdom work?

Wisdom is

- informed by knowledge,
- integrated in stillness,
- accompanied by confidence,
- and leads to peace.



Truth

Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom

Love...

Love is the beginning, middle and end.

Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom

the beginning

The four noble truths

- Suffering
- Origination
- Cessation
- Path

The fields of wisdom: the 3 characteristics

- Impermanence
- Suffering
- Not-self
- (Emptiness)

The fields of wisdom: the five aggregates

- Form (*rūpa*)
- Feeling (*vedanā*)
- Perception (*saññā*)
- Activities (*saṅkhārā*)
- Consciousness (*viññāṇa*)

The fields of wisdom: the six senses

- Eye/forms
- Ear/sounds
- Nose/smells
- Tongue/tastes
- Body/touch
- Mind/mental objects and processes

The fields of wisdom: the elements

- Earth
- Water
- Fire
- Air
- (Space)
- (Consciousness)

The fields of wisdom: dependent origination

Observing patterns of relationships:

- This being, that is
- This arising, that arises
- This not being, that is not
- This ceasing, that ceases



by the existence