

On Buddhist Wisdom

Meaning of wisdom in Buddhist education

Rather than an education system which is geared to testing and to competition and to preparing people for a particular livelihood, the emphasis of Buddhist education is on teaching children how to learn, how to enjoy learning, to love wisdom for its own sake. It teaches them the emotional maturity enabling them to make use of their knowledge to create a happy life for themselves and their family and to contribute positively to the society in which they live. It in no way compromises on the work of preparing children to make a good livelihood, but it lets them see that life is deeper and richer than working in order to consume.

It seems that these days more and more employers are not looking so much for people with proficiency in a particular area as much as smart intellectually flexible people who know how to learn new things and can adapt to the changes in new technologies and changes in society. This is because many of the things people learn in schools are out of date by the time they start working, and because in a knowledge based economy freshness of vision, creativity and innovation are given the highest value.

In order to flourish in the world it's not then a matter of merely accumulating a body of knowledge, so much as **cultivating a strong but supple mind and the ability to develop life skills such as skillful communication, the ability to work in a team, patience, resilience (the**

ability to bounce back after disappointments), the ability to manage one's moods, and to protect it from pride, arrogance, greed, hatred, depression, anxiety, and panic. These abilities are being increasingly recognized as being more useful and necessary in the long run to a successful working life rather than having a particular degree under your belt.

This is why Buddhist education is not at all idealistic. It is not meant to produce unworldly people, virtuous but unable to cope in the so-called 'real world'. It is rather based on the conviction that the Buddhist developmental process which can in its fullness take someone all the way to enlightenment, on a scaled-down level provides the best possible kind of education for ordinary people.