



BUDDHISM IN ACTION

Wisdom Perspectives
For Our Time

Discussion Questions, Buddhism in Action, Episode 3: “Enlightened Government”

1. The Declaration of Independence (of the “thirteen united States of America”) mentions “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” What makes a meaningful life?
2. The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America says that one purpose is to “provide for the common defence.” According to Buddhism, what is the real enemy? i.e., what do we need to defend ourselves against?
3. Both the Declaration and the Preamble mention Liberty. In addition, the Bill of Rights protects specific freedoms. How much freedom can you have in samsara (cyclic existence)?
4. How can an enlightened government support maximizing these freedoms and opportunities of the citizens. How much can a government do in this regard, actually?
5. The Preamble starts with “We the People...” How can “we the people” support our country’s enlightened activities?

References:

<http://constitutionus.com/>

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

Bodhicaryavatara, or *Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*, by Shantideva, is available in many translations under slightly varying titles.

Wheel of Sharp Weapons, by Dharmarakshita, is a lo-jong (thought-transformation) text, available in various translations.