

Buddhanussati

Contemplation on the Qualities of the Buddha

The main purpose of Buddhism is purification of mind. Our real happiness completely depends on how far we have purified our mind from negative thoughts such as greed, anger and delusion, and how much virtue, tranquility and wisdom we have developed. Here, the confidence (*Saddhā*) on the Triple Gem, i.e., the Buddha, His teaching (the Dhamma) and His noble disciples (the Sangha) is the major point that determines as to how skillful we are in the pursuit of Enlightenment. *Saddhā* should be accompanied from the beginning to the very end of the path of purification. When we practice Buddhist doctrines, our confidence gradually increases because we see the results throughout our lives. Simultaneously, when confidence in the Buddha's message grows up, the energy also upturns since our inner peace grows up.

If someone hopes to go on the path of purification with practicing Buddha's message, he or she should develop the quality of faith, belief or confidence gradually. Confidence is the first step in every religion. The difference of Buddhism is it never says '**come and believe**', it says '**come and see**'. The confidence increases according to our knowledge and understanding in Buddhism. That is why the Buddha said, **one who sees the Dhamma sees me; one who sees me sees the Dhamma** (*Yo dhammam passati so mam passati, yo mam passati so dhammam passati*).

At the very beginning of the path of liberation, confidence can arise by seeing or hearing something in Buddhist tradition. Further, it increases by listening to the Buddha's real message (which relates to understand the Karmic law and the Dependent Origination) and associating with the Buddha's noble disciples. Depending on our knowledge about our mind, body and the word according to the Buddha's message, we can go forward with confidence. Generally, we can explain confidence as the faith in the Triple Gem i.e., Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. More exposure to the noble qualities of The Supreme Buddha, His teachings (*Dhamma*) and His noble disciples (*Sangha*) along with motivation and positive attitude can be called confidence in Buddhism. Especially, the confidence of Buddha's Enlightenment is the key to cultivate all the qualities of Enlightenment.

The disciple of the Noble One is endowed with verified faith, confidence and conviction in the Awakened Buddha as follows; Worthy (*Araham*), honorable and perfectly enlightened (*Sammā Sambuddho*) is the Buddha! Fully consummate in knowledge and behavior (*Vijjacaranasampanno*), totally transcended, expert in all the phases and dimensions (*Sugato*), knower of all worlds (*Lokavidu*), unsurpassable trainer of those who can be tamed (*Anuttaro purisadammasārathi*), both teacher and guide of deities and humans (*Sattha Devamanussanam*), awakened and enlightened (*Buddho*) blessed and exalted (*Bhagavā*), is the Buddha. With the

understanding and confidence of the Buddha's Enlightenment, the disciple is endowed with verified faith, confidence and conviction in the Dhamma as follows; Perfectly formulated is this Buddha-Dhamma (*Svākkhato*), visible right here and now (*Sanditthiko*), immediately effective, timeless (*Akālika*), inviting each and every one to come and see for themselves (*Ehipassiko*), inspect, examine and verify leading each and every one through progress towards complete perfection (*Opanaiko*), directly observable, experienceable and realizable by each intelligence (*paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi*). With the confidence on the Buddha and the Dhamma, the disciple becomes clever with verified faith, confidence and conviction in the Noble Sangha as follows; perfectly trained is this noble Sangha community of the Buddha's Noble disciples: Trained in the right way, the true way, the good way, the direct way! Therefore these 8 kinds of individuals, these four noble pairs, deserve both gifts, grants, sacrifice, offerings, hospitality and reverential salutation with joined palms, since this noble Sangha community of the Buddha, is an unsurpassable and forever an unsurpassed field of merit for this world, to honor, respect, support, offer and protect.

This confidence is not a blind faith. It depends on the understanding of Buddha's message. Buddhism explains confidence as a great wealth (*saddhā dhanam*). If we are rich in material wealth, we are rich in happiness. However, that happiness can be changed instantly because it is material, but the wealth (treasure) of confidence is not like that. It doesn't change when material richness changes. *Saddhā* will not die along with the physical body. If we have strong confidence on the Buddha, his teachings and his noble disciples, our mind always is full with satisfactoriness and happiness. Then negative thoughts such as anger, greed, ignorance and jealousy will have no place in our mind. And positive thoughts such as loving kindness, compassion, generosity and wisdom will also be gradually developed in our mind.

The Buddha says the understanding of suffering causes to increase the confidence. If someone has the knowledge about arising of suffering as per the Buddhist perspective, his confidence will gradually increase. At the very beginning, he understands that when we do some unwholesome deeds with wicked mind in our life, we will have the bad results (disadvantages) not only here after but in this life itself as well. So too we will be the good results of good deeds. If a person has this knowledge, that person doesn't like to suffer anymore, as he is intelligent. That is why he motivates himself to get rid of evils and cultivate good in his life, as soon as he can. This is the nature of the confidence in the Dhamma. Therefore, Buddhism says that all good qualities which are wholesome, depend on confidence (*Saddhā mulika sabbepi kusalā dhammā*).

If we believe in Buddha's message, we believe in destiny or *karmic law*.

Then we don't do any evil (unwholesome deeds) and cultivate good (wholesome deeds).

Furthermore, we try to get rid of suffering and try to find real happiness.

Buddhism continually emphasizes the importance of confidence on the Triple Gem (*saddha*) because it is an essential quality that we develop.

Saddhā is the seed (*saddhā beejam*), the initiator, and thus the source at the beginning.

Saddhā is the hand that takes up all the advantageous mental states.

Saddhā is the wealth (*saddhā dhanam*) above all, since it brings real and lasting happiness.

Saddhā is the jump (*saddhāya tarati ogham*), since it enables beings to cross the flood of pain.

Saddhā is the purifier, since it cleans pollutions of the mind.

Saddha is one of the main spiritual faculties. When we practice confidence towards the Triple Gem, other spiritual qualities will also develop within us. As much as we have confidence in the Triple Gem, it is able to develop four other spiritual qualities i.e., energy (*Viriya*), mindfulness or awareness (*Sati*), concentration or tranquility (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Panna*) for the success of our life.

Furthermore, if we have knowledge about suffering as the Buddha mentioned, our faith in Buddha improves. Especially, when we see the arising and ceasing of the five aggregates, we can see the way to get rid of suffering. The nature of practicing Buddha's message is to have directly visible results.

To cultivate *saddhā* we have to acquire four other qualities. They are;

1. Associating good friends (*Sappurisa sansevo* - සප්පුරිස සංසේවෝ)
2. Listening to the Buddha's message to cease suffering (*Saddhamma savaṇam* – සද්ධම්මසවණං)
3. Wise reflection (*Yoniso manasikāro* – යෝනිසෝ මනසිකාරෝ)
4. Practicing accordingly (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti* – ධම්මානුධම්ම පටිපත්ති)

From the beginning to the end of the path of purification we have to develop these qualities again and again every moment with alertness and understanding. The more we practice the more result we can see in this life itself. Developing mindfulness with wisdom while seeing the worldly reality such as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness is the ultimate goal of practice. Final result of practicing them is the liberation from all sufferings and living with the highest contentment and loving kindness.

May The Triple Gem Bless You!

(Tuesday Dhamma Discussion in Los Angeles Buddhist Vihara)

06/02/2015