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## **An investigation of the concept of *Saddhā* in *Theravāda* Buddhism and its significance in the modern world.**

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### **Abstract:**

This article seeks to offer insights on among the most widely deliberated concept within the domain of Buddhism and Buddhist studies i.e. *Sadhana*. It carefully analyses the Pali sources and problematizes the term *Sadhana* to facilitate an academic dialogue on the issue. Further explored are the concepts of happiness and insights are offered from several primary and secondary sources.

**Keywords: Buddhism, Buddhist Studies, Meditation, Pali language, Buddha, Peace, Mindfulness**

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*Saddhā* a Pāli term is translated as faith, belief, trust, confidence, and assurance. It means faith in someone or something.<sup>1</sup> *Saddhā* should be followed by an action to prove the truth which is performed through prayer, worship or meditation. It is only through the three actions such as bodily, verbally and by thought that a Buddhist is intended to reach the final goal or the supreme happiness (*Nibbāna*).

*Saddhā* has to be understood that there is a different expression of teaching of the *Dhamma* in both *Theravāda* and the *Mahāvāna* sect. In the present time, we notice a difference in the teaching of the *Buddha* and it has to be understood that *Theravāda* Buddhists follow religious traditions that prevailed in India two thousand five hundred years ago. They practice the original form of Buddhism as it was handed down by the teachings of *Buddha*. The classical *Theravāda* literature consists of the teachings of the *Buddha* arranged and compiled into three divisions: “The *Vinaya Piṭaka* is ‘the book of discipline, concerns rules and customs; The *Sutta Piṭaka*, ‘the book of discourses’ is a collection of sermons and utterances by the *Buddha* and his disciples; The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, ‘the book of higher doctrine’ is a detailed psychological and philosophical analysis of the *Dhamma*.”<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the *Saddhā*, on the other hand can be felt when it becomes a product of the energy, effort, and endeavor called *Viriyaṭṭhāna*. One wants to cross the ocean of suffering of their present life and must train the mind to gain the ultimate knowledge and gain wisdom and enhance fulfillment of *Pāramī* (perfection)<sup>3</sup>. Buddhism believes that ‘the *Dhamma* in a human being is what can help oneself. No one else can help you. You are your own savior. Every human being

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<sup>1</sup> Pāli-English Dictionary by T.W. Rhys Davids & William Stede, p.674-675, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Compendium of Buddhist literature by Chandra B. Varma, p.37-38, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Parami as Dāna Sīla, Nekkhamma, Paññā, Viriya, Khanti, Sacca, Adhitthana, Mettā, Upekkhā: Bv.6 & Phra Brahmaganaporn (P.A. Payutto), p.239-240, 2010.

has the ability to completely control his own mind with practices and actions toward the right way. They should train their own mind because, ‘the mind is the forerunner of self. The mind is chief. If the mind is trained to the right way, they can help themselves to be pure of the mind’<sup>4</sup>.

The *Buddha* taught us that all beings have ability to free themselves from suffering; and therefore attain happiness and peace. One can faithfully describe the *Buddha* not as a God but as a teacher who taught his devotees a theory from which they could restore wisdom and also conquer greed, anger and ignorance which blinds us from seeing the right path.

*Saddhā* in Buddhism acts as a first step to attain the aim of Buddhism. The *Buddha* recommends devotees to believe the result of the action (*Kamma*). A person should always do good things in a polite way to help mankind. This theory or philosophy in the religion helps one to understand that the base for this kind of thought is instilled in *Saddhā* that is deep rooted in a soul that loves the path of peace and harmony.

The characteristic (*Lakkhana*) of *Saddhā* as explained in the special books by the famous scholar *Buddhaghosa*<sup>5</sup> and other scholars such as the *Milindapaṇhā* in the *Tipiṭaka* literature; it also includes articles from various scholars to even Sri Lankan monks. The *Visuddhimagga* has explained the characteristic of *Saddhā* as “to having faith, or trust”<sup>6</sup>. When one has *Saddhā* or faith, confidence and trust upon someone or something *Saddhā* naturally becomes faith or trust. It is also pointed out that Buddhism considers one to be its own master and it is not faith that is important but effort. Sao Pannyanada further adds, ‘taking refuge in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha* shows that there must have some form of faith in an act of taking refuge.’<sup>7</sup>

The function (*Rasa*) of *Saddhā* is to clarify, like a water-clearing gem or to enter into it like the setting out across a flood.<sup>8</sup> It means to make everything clear. *Saddhā* purifies the mind by clearing up the impurities which is the basic role in Buddhism. The entire Buddhist has *Saddhā* in the Triple Gem known as the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha*. Buddhism does not require a believer in any god but rather the knowledge which is based on *Saddhā* in a trustful manner. They have *Saddhā* in the *Buddha*, as the *Buddha* has the qualities which are sufficient to follow the teaching and the idea. The *Buddha* has a quality or materials to prove *Saddhā* which arises up when a person sees the qualities or the resources of the *Buddha*. That qualities or material is known as *Pamānika* which means material form of outward appearance and cause to rise of *Saddhā* for devotees. *Pamānika*: This means those who measure, judge or take standard. :

The *Buddha* has the four good qualities which are; 1. The good qualities of the body, 2. The good qualities of the speech, 3. The good qualities of the mind, 4. The good qualities of the activities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dhammapada, no 2 by K.sri Dhammananda, p.42, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Buddhaghosa was 5<sup>th</sup> –century Indian Theravāda Buddhist commentator and scholar. His best-known work is the *visuddhimagga* ‘Path of Purification’ and comprehensive summary and analysis of the Theravada understanding of the Buddha path to liberation.

<sup>6</sup> Bhikkhuñānamoli, 1991, p.524

<sup>7</sup> Sao pannyanada 2001, p.1 accessed on 19.03.2016

<sup>8</sup> Vism. p.524

<sup>9</sup> A.II.71; Pug.7,53; DhA.114; SnA.242. & Phra Brahmaganaporn (P.A. Payutto), p.122-123, 2010.

The manifestation (*Paccupaṭṭana*) of *Saddhā* is non-fogginess or resolution.<sup>10</sup> It is the result of having *Saddhā* in Triple Gem. Because when *Saddhā* crosses over the mind, the mind is calm and quiet, it becomes clear of defilements and the mind calms down. When one want to learn and practice the *Dhamma* which clearly means non-fogginess in their mind and when they want to accept or make resolution, they can make it clearly in the right way or the good way through meditation.

The proximate cause (*Padaṭṭhāna*) of *Saddhā* have faith in or the things beginning with hearing the Good *Dhamma* (*Saddhamma*)<sup>11</sup> as the seed of all wholesome *Dhamma*: and the factors of stream-entry which means *Saddhā* is the way that lead toward the stream-entry.<sup>12</sup> The stream-entry means the *Sotāpanna*<sup>13</sup> and is the first level of *Ariyapuggala*<sup>14</sup> known as the Noble ones, Noble persons. *Saddhā* is the factors of stream-entry or stream-winning. When *Saddhā* overcome the mind one have to train the mind by the good *Dhamma* to see and to understand the real thing. The benefit of understanding the *Dhamma* is based on *Saddhā*.

When the five hindrances (*Nivarana*) such as sensual desire (*Kāmacchanda*), Ill-will (*Byāpāda*), Sloth and torpor (*Thīna-middha*), Restlessness and remorse (*Uddhacc-kukkucca*), Skeptical doubt (*Vichikiccha*).<sup>15</sup> These interrupts and blocks the mind of the mediator and the mind become unable to concentrate and run away follow the object of attachment. If the mind has *Saddhā* in the Triple Gem to develop with controlling the mind deeply to concentrate at one point and create energy. The energy created is stronger than the five hindrances which mean the energy is stronger than the five hindrances (*Nivarana*). When one finds the correct path to train or develop the mind through meditation one finally becomes able to completely eradicate the five hindrances through the stages of sanctity. The mind becomes clear, serene untroubled and strong with the knowledge and therefore can visualize the real condition.

These types of *Saddhā* in Theravāda Buddhism which are as follows:

“*Kamma-Saddhā*: faith in the action of the law of the *Kamma*, which is practiced through the action of the body, the speech and the mind. The *Kamma* is distinguished as good *Kamma* and a bad *Kamma* on the basis of the action committed. It is the belief which causes the human being to receive the noble property.

*Vipāka-Saddhā*: faith in the result of the *Kamma* and it emphasizes on understanding and reminding oneself of the results of the *Kamma*. According to this, whatever we do is *Kamma* and the result of this *Kamma* follows us like a shadow. Therefore bad *Kamma* results in pain and suffering whereas the good *Kamma* results in a state of happiness. It is the belief which causes the human being to go across *Ogha*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Vism.1991, p. 524.

<sup>11</sup> Vism. 1991, p.524.

<sup>12</sup> S.V., 343 & Vism. 1991, p.524.

<sup>13</sup> Pug. 37-39; A. III. 87; & Buddhist Dictionary by Nyanatiloka, 172, 1970.

<sup>14</sup> Rhys Davids T.W. & Willian Stede, 2004, p.77.

<sup>15</sup> A.III.p.62; Vbh.p.378; & PhraBrahmagunaphorn (P.A. Payutto), 2010, p.167.

<sup>16</sup> Ogha means flood of defilement, Rhys Davids T.W. & Willian Stede, 2004, p.164.

*Kamassakatā-Saddhā*: faith in the individual ownership of the *Kamma*. It states that the human beings all over the world are in different situations because of their past *Kamma*. It is the belief which causes the human being to attain the *Dharma*.

*Tathāgatabodhi-Saddhā*: faith in the reality of the Enlightenment of the *Buddha*. It completely acknowledges and follows the *Buddha*'s idea as the supreme knowledge, compassion and purity in all action

*Ratanattaya-Saddhā*: faith in the Triple Gem such the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha*.<sup>17</sup>

*Saddhā* as a component of the teaching of the *Buddha* has relation with wisdom (*Paññā*). *Saddhā* has the power to create one's own energy by following and practicing the teaching of *Buddha* through meditation in order to have clear idea about the *Dhamma*. It has been originated for the development of the action by physical and mental support, in order to increase the knowledge towards understanding truth or the real situation, which is reflected by seeing the nature of all living beings. It supports one to develop the knowledge by learning and practicing the *Dhamma* through meditation by training and having control over an object to purify the mind with good moral conduct and the virtues. The *Dhamma* of the *Buddha* needs to be understood clearly through learning and practice based on diligent and tolerance.

The practice of *Saddhā* has been in the modern Buddhism by the *Pūjā*.<sup>18</sup> the *Pūjā* is presented by bowing, offering, lights, chanting and meditation. It cause to be success in the present live and has been to purify the mind leading to supreme happiness as the goal of Buddhism (*Nibbāna*).

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<sup>17</sup> Vbh.328 & Phra Brahmaganaporn (P. A. Payutto), p.140, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Rhys Davids T.W. & Willian Stede, p.471, 2004.