

Thesis Title : A Study of the Relation between Effort (Viriya) and Enlightenment in Theravada Buddhist Scriptures

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Date of Graduation : 31/March/2015

Abstract

This thesis has three objectives: to study Effort (Viriya) in the Theravāda Buddhist Scriptures, to study the dhamma attainment in the Theravāda Buddhist Scriptures and to study the relation of Effort (Viriya) and Enlightenment in Theravāda Buddhist Scriptures. Clarified and analyzed data are taken from the Theravāda Buddhist scriptures namely, the Tipitaka, Buddhist commentaries, Tīga, and other related scriptures then composed, explained in details, corrected and verified by Buddhist scholars.

The study found that Viriya is a Pali term which can be translated into the Thai language as ‘effort’, endeavor, perseverance, striving hard, strength, power or might. The character of effort is that it will look for benefit, abandon unwholesome deed and develop wholesome deed together in both body and mind. One who has the effort is one who tries hard for the good deed of the outcome. Effort can be divided into two kinds: (1) the worldly effort, which is a guiding way of practice so one can be out of craving and (2) the supermundane effort, which is to clean one’s mind. The result of the second kind is that one will be out of defilement while understanding things as they truly are.

The dhamma attainment, according to the Theravāda Buddhism, refers to the higher development, the Lokuttaradhamma or supermundane stages. That is, to have reached the Noble Paths and Fruitions and have become noble persons in Buddhism. The levels of attainment can be divided into 4 pairs of four Magga and four Phala. The person is then considered the noble one, which arrange from Sotāpanna: Stream-Enterer, Sakadāgāmī: Once-Returner, Anāgāmī: Non-Returner and Arahanta: the Worthy One. With these orders, Saṃyojana: fetters or bondage are used as their measurement. The Saṃyojana consists of: Sakkāyadiṭṭhi: personality-view, Vicikicchā: doubt, Sīlabbataparāmāsa: adherence to rules and rituals, Kāmarāga: sensual lust, Paṭigha: repulsion, Rūparāga: greed for fine-material existence, Arūparāga: greed for immaterial existence, Māna: conceit, Uddhacca: restlessness and Avijjā: ignorance. In order to practice for dhamma attainment a meditator has to apply the Threefold Training, which consist of (1) Adhisīla-sikkhā:

training in higher morality, (2) Adhicitta-sikkhā: training in higher mentality and (3) Adhipaññā- sikkhā: training in higher wisdom. These are the rules for training oneself for higher levels achievement. The practice which supports dhamma attainment is called Bodhipakkhiya-dhamma, which is a group of the 37 virtues partaking of enlightenment. They are Padhāna (effort, exertion), Iddhipāda (path of accomplishment), Indriya: controlling faculties, Bala: power, Bojjhaṅga: enlightenment factors and Aṭṭaṅgika-magga: the Noble Eightfold Path.

The study found that the relation of Effort (Viriya) and Enlightenment in Theravāda Buddhist Scriptures depend upon Bodhipakkhiya-dhamma, which consists of: (1) Satipaṭṭhāna or foundations of mindfulness, which is to contemplate and see things as they are, (2) Padhāna (effort, exertion), (3) Iddhipāda (path of accomplishment), (4) Indriya: controlling faculties and Bala: power, (5) Bojjhaṅga: enlightenment factors and (6) Aṭṭaṅgika-magga: the Noble Eightfold Path. The study found that Bodhipakkhiya-dhamma plays the very important role for the Enlightenment. This is because some of the dhamma can be practiced together but some cannot. However, when the Enlightenment comes everything will work altogether at the same time.