



THE FIVE SPIRITUAL FACULTIES IN THERAVARA BUDDHISM

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ABSTRACT

In the Buddha's teachings, the Bodhipakkiya-dhamma is the essence of the whole Dhamma. This Bodhipakkiya-dhamma is to be used not only in the quest for spiritual achievements but also in the mundane life or in the daily life of human beings. Nowadays, there are so many social problems in the human society in relevant with political, economic, social, religious cases and so on.

KEYWORDS: *Sila (Morality), Ssmadhi (Concentration) and Panna (Wisdom).*

INTRODUCTION

Indariya is a term which can be seen in so many places of Theravada *Tipitaka*. It is also one of the significant methods that can lead to the realization of *Nibbana*, the final goal of Buddhists. By practicing this method, one can accomplish not only supra-mundane achievement but also achievement in mundane life. Nowadays many people are facing with different kinds of problems connected with family, friends and economy etc. They need to overcome these by using correct way. Therefore, they are searching it by asking other people and reading suitable books that can pay a good suggestion or guidance. Religious teachers pointed out so many different methods in order to fulfill the solution of social problems and human suffering. As some of those methods were right to some extent, but most led to wrong ways astray from proper reasons to gain what they wished. Finally, some people found the Buddha's teachings that can help to overcome their problems by practicing themselves those. After the Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment, He discovered so many methods that can lead to *Nibbana* and contributed them to the world for the sake of living beings. By these methods, enumerable human has gained the goal (the liberation of suffering) and so many social problems have been reduced in the affective ways. When we conclude the Buddha's teachings, there are 37 kinds of essential methods. They are called the Factors of Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya-dhamma*).

Among these *indriyas*, the first six *indriyas* are called sensory faculties, and seventh, eighth and ninth are physical faculties. Tenth to fourteenth is the five feeling faculties, and fifteenth to nineteenth are the five spiritual faculties. The last three are final-knowledge faculties. But they all are not pertaining to the attainment of enlightenment. Among them, specifically the faculty of confidence, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, and the faculty of wisdom are helpful for the attainment of enlightenment. Therefore, only these five are considered as the factors of enlightenment. Therefore, we will here discuss only the five spiritual faculties because these spiritual faculties are the most significant factors for those who seek mundane and supra-mundane life achievements.

The explanation of Indriya (the five spiritual faculties)

We will now give a brief explanation of the term *indriya*. The *pali* definition of *indriya* is: “*indassakammamindriyam*.” This means the act of ruling by rulers. “The act of ruling by rulers” means that wherever the ruler rules, nobody can go against him. Just as the kings who rule over the others, the spiritual faculties rule over the physicality and mentality. Ruling over here means to keep things under one’s self.

In the present context, the control or rule that one exercises over one’s mind is the essential point in these controlling faculties. These are the five faculties; (1) *Saddhindriya*: faith and confidence (2) *Viriya*: energy (3) *Satindriya*: mindfulness (4) *Samadhindriya*: concentration (5) *Pannindriya*: wisdom.

Saddhindriya(faith)

Saddhindriya is to some extent synonymous with *saddha*. But there are two kinds of *saddha*, namely: (1) *Pakati-saddha*, ordinary faith (2) *Bhavana saddha*, faith developed (or matured) by meditation.

The faith and confidence (*saddha*) that leads ordinary men and women to perform acts of almsgiving (*dana*), morality (*sila*) and “surrogate” (or rudimentary) meditation (*bhavana*), is called ordinary faith (*pakati-saddha*). Here, as was shown in the simile of the madman, although such *saddha* is to some extent a controlling faculty, its control does not extend to the capacity of controlling the unstable minds of ordinary folk in the work of meditation (*Bhavana*). Control is exercised over the instability only to the extent of leading to acts of almsgiving, morality and rudimentary meditation.

Moreover, the confidence means the confidence in the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha* and accepting merit as well as demerit and their results. Faith is another name for that. However, it is to be understood that faith in other things than the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and *Sangha* are not regarded as confidence in this case (*saddha*). Pleasing is another term for confidence. The defilements like delusion, views and conceit never allow mind to accept the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha*. Instead, they become obstacles. They are accepted only when the defilements are dissipated. With the arising of confidence defilements, which obstruct the acceptance of the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha* fade away. Then the mind becomes clear. That clearance of mind should be understood like the clearance of mind should be understood like the clearance of water from mud and other things.

In other words, the confidence means the cleanliness of mind from defilements, which hinder the acceptance of the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha*. In accordance with this, mind becomes clear. Some people mistakenly grasp happiness or love as confidence (*saddha*). Happiness and love towards the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha* are the results of confidence. That confidence which arises as the results of accepting the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha* put one’s mind and mental states as well for the acceptance of the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and the *Sangha*. In such a way, confidence becomes a spiritual faculty. Therefore, it is called the faculty of confidence

Without faith and confidence, the mind never inclines to *kusala-kamma* (wholesome volitional actions), for ordinarily it takes delight only in evil acts. This holds true also for the effort to attain to the purification of virtue (*sila-visuddhi*) or to engage in the study of the sacred texts. This is how ordinary wholesome acts (*pakati-kusala-kamma*) are produced by the control of ordinary faith which is undeveloped by genuine meditation (*abhavita*). In the work of attending to a subject of meditation (*kammatthana*) for the practice of tranquility and insight, ordinary faith has not sufficient control over the mind as the mind is apt to recoil and rebound from that faith and to turn elsewhere. In meditative work, ordinary faith is not sufficient. It is developed faith that prepares the seed-bed, so to say, for the acquisition of great strength and power through the practice of meditation, such as mindfulness of breathing. In the context of the “requisites of enlightenment” it is developed faith that is called *saddhindriya*, the controlling faculty of faith. In the field of meditative exercises, it represents the disappearance of unstable and oscillating attention and the appearance of a clear and steady mind. The mind’s attention can be steadily fixed only on those objects which it finds clear. The practice of body

contemplation such as mindfulness of breathing is the preparation of the seed-bed for *bhavana-saddha*, i.e., faith and confidence developed and matured by meditation. If the mind is fixed on the contemplation of the body, such as the out and in-breaths, it amounts to the attainment of developed faith. If then the work is continued in the field of tranquility and insight the ability to destroy the three planes of personality belief can be acquired even within this life. The work of *samatha* and *vipassana* needs for their proper performance, reliance on a teacher who is very learned in the *Dahmma*.

Viriyindriya(energy)

Viriyindriya is to some extent synonymous with *viriya*. But there are two kinds, or degrees, of *viriya*, namely; *Pakati-viriya*, ordinary energy and *Bhavana-viriya*, energy developed by meditation. Ordinary energy (*pakati-viriya*) can be easily recognized. Persons who possess much ordinary energy in worldly matters can easily attain developed energy (*bhavana-viriya*). The strict observances (*dhutanga*) of a monk are instances of bodily energy of a developed nature (*kayika-bhavana-viriya*). If, after setting up developed bodily energy (such as reducing sleep and being alert and energetic), there is still no mental energy (*cetasika-viriya*), such as enthusiasm in keen attention to meditation (*bhavana-manasikara*), then steady application to or concentration on the subjects of meditation (*kammattana*), such as mindfulness of breathing, cannot be attained, and the period of work is unduly lengthened without achieving clarity of mind and perception.

Any kind of work will be properly and appropriately done only if the person performing it obtains quick mastery over it, it will be improperly done if the work obtains mastery over the person. By "the work obtaining mastery over the person" is meant that the work is done without real energy, as a result of which no concrete results appear, and as days and months drag on, distaste for meditation) and slackness in body postures appear, leading to sloth, with the appearance of sloth, progress in the work slows down, and with the slowing down of progress, further sloth develops. The idea then appears that it would be better to change the form of the work. Thus, constant changes in forms of work occur, and in that way the work obtains mastery over the person lacking energy. In meditative work, quick success is obtained only by one endowed with both bodily and mental energy. From the moment when body contemplation is set up, the energy that develops day by day is *bhavana viriya*, energy developed by meditation, and it is this energy that, in the *bodhipakkhiya-dhammas*, is called the faculty of energy, *viriyindriya*. It represents the disappearance of sloth and laziness in meditative work and the appearance of enthusiasm and vigorous. The mind takes delight in dwelling on objects on which its attention is strong. Thence, the task of setting up developed energy, and graded development, is identical with that of the faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*).

Satindriya(mindfulness)

The faculty of mindfulness (*satindriya*), in the context of the *bodhipakkhiya-dhammas*, means the setting up of mindful body-contemplation (*kayagata-sati*), e.g., on out and in-breath, and the *satipatthana*, until *bhavana-sati* (meditative mindfulness), called *satipatthana*, until supra-mundane right mindfulness (*lokuttara-samma-sati*), as a supra-mundane path-factor, is reached. The mind of the ordinary person is always inclined to the five codes of sensual pleasure and unwholesome deeds. That is the nature of that mind. In order to run it to wholesome things and keep it in wholesome ways, one has to have a certain power. The mental state that turns the mind from unwholesome things and the five code of sensual pleasures, and establishes it on wholesome is mindfulness. Awareness is another term for that. Since it is agreeable with one self and endowed with consciousness and mental cultivated gradually it becomes the right mindfulness, the seventh factor of the supreme mundane Eightfold Path. Developing right mindfulness of the path of Arahant of the Eightfold Path is the end of its development. It is not the mindfulness of people who are from time to time to alms but mindfulness that which is developed and cultivated engaged in higher meditation becomes the spiritual faculty of mindfulness of the factors of enlightenment.

Meditation on the establishment of mindfulness is the place where mindfulness is present. When practicing mindfulness of breathing or the contemplation on the parts of the body like head-hairs,

if the mind remains without roaming it could be focused on the parts of the body without any difficulty. Also, if the mind remains with the parts of the body even for a long time, it is to be understood that it is the sign of the development of the spiritual faculty of mindfulness. By the same token, if the mind is quickly distracted it is to be understood that mind is quickly distracted it is to be understood that the spiritual faculty of mindfulness has not yet been developed.

Samahindriya(concentration) and Pannindriya(wisdom)

The nature of mind is that inclination, slanting to everything. As the person who strives to grab the whole bunch of apples together loses them all, the mind when focused on many things at the same time cannot be gained right knowledge from any. In order to understand each and everything better, mind should be focused only on one item at a time. Even though the object is one there are diversities in it. In order to gain clear knowledge of the object, mind should be focused only on one particular thing of such diversities as well. Otherwise, no knowledge can be gained of anything. Though the mind is attracted to many objects simultaneously even many formations of the same object, it is necessary to keep the mind only on one object at a time. The spiritual faculty of concentration is the establishment of mind on one particular object and the nature of its domination. That is also a mental state. That can be seen in each consciousness. The consciousness cannot arise without concentration. But that frail concentration which is in each and every consciousness and of each person is not sufficient enough to practice meditation to gain *jhana* etc. therefore, that is not considered as the factors of enlightenment. That concentration can be developed. When concentration is developed and cultivated many streams of consciousness could be maintained on one object.

The faculties of concentration and wisdom (*samahindriya* and *pannindriya*) may be defined and described similarly. The faculty of concentration dispels the distraction of mind when it is applied in the work of *satipatthana* on such an object as the mindfulness on breathing. The faculty of wisdom dispels confusion and haziness. The faculties of faith, energy and mindfulness, which precede those of concentration and wisdom, are like those who raise a king to kingship. They raise the latter two faculties until the topmost excellence is attained.

After the setting up of body contemplation and the attainment of mastery over one's mind, if the *samatharoad* is taken, the faculty of concentration becomes the eight meditative attainments (*samapatti* or *jhana*), while the faculty of wisdom becomes the five higher spiritual knowledge, (*abhinna*), such as the supernormal powers etc. If the *vipassana* road be taken, the faculty of concentration becomes the voidness concentration (*sunnata-samadhi*), condition less concentration (*animitta-samadhi*), or desire less concentration (*appanihita-samadhi*), while the faculty of wisdom becomes the five purifications (*visuddhi*) pertaining to wisdom, the knowledge of the three contemplations (*anmupassana-nana*), the ten insight knowledge (*vipassana-nana*), the knowledge pertaining to the four faith and the four fruitions and the nineteen of reviewing (*paccavekkhana-onana*). This shows how the five faculties occur together. *Indriya* has two functions. One of them is keeping others under one's leadership and the other one is suppressing the opponents. Here the faculty is described as the first meaning. This faculty should be described as the other meaning as well, for example, the suppressing of opponents. This is how it is? Doubt, wrong views, delusion etc. are the opponents of confidence. It is the action of the faculty of confidence that suppressing them and devoid them from the mind. Laziness and sleepiness etc. are the opponents for striving. Suppressing them and avoiding them from the mind is the action of the faculty of striving. The sensual desire etc., that takes one's mindfulness and concentration. Suppressing them and avoid them from the mind is the action joy both the faculty of mindfulness and concentration. Delusion is the opponent of wisdom. Suppressing it and avoiding it from the mind it the action of the faculty of wisdom.

CONCLUSION

As we discussed above, *Indriya* is like a king or ruler of a country. We cannot imagine living in a country without a king or a ruler. If there is no king in the country, things will be in disarray even though some hardworking people in the country try hard to develop their country. Even in a small

family, if there is no ruler, it must not be a happy and successful family because family members do not listen, obey and respect each other. They listen and respect each other only under a family ruler. Likewise, a meditator should develop the five spiritual faculties when he takes meditation. There will be very difficult practicing the Dhamma and meditation in any other ways if he does not develop the five spiritual faculties because the five spiritual faculties control the meditator's mind and lead to the right way to seek the Dhamma or the liberation of suffering.

In the Buddha's teachings, the Bodhipakkhiyadhamma is the essence of the whole Dhamma. This Bodhipakkhiyadhamma is to be used not only in the quest for spiritual achievements but also in the mundane life or in the daily life of human beings. Nowadays, there are so many social problems in the human society in relevant with political, economic, social, religious cases and so on. They are living in the stressful and depressed life facing with such kind of problems. To reduce their problems is to practice the Dhamma including the five spiritual faculties. If they practice the five spiritual faculties, their problems will probably be reduced. This is the brief account of the five spiritual faculties (*Indriya*). In the Buddhist literature, the term *Indriya* can be seen in so many places because it is one of the most significant factors for those who seek the Four Noble Truth. Therefore, we can only show its definition, nature and significance in brief. We will have to extend doing this research in the right way. Actually, we should do research not only this but also every factor of *Bodhipakkhiya-dhamma* so as to be easy to understand for ordinary people.

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