

On Faith

Faith and the Cultivation of Faith

an excerpt from *The Three Essentials in Practicing the Teachings of the Buddha*

By Master Yin Shun, edited from a translation by Ch'ng Eng Chye

What is Faith (Saddha)? "The nature of faith is pure mind" – this is a very difficult (concept) to understand! It needs to be examined from both the causes and conditions that generated the faith and the effect or fruits that result from the faith.

"Profound Endurance (Ksanti)" means deep forbearance, that is, "Profound Understanding (sk. Adhimoksa; pali. Adhimokkha). Because profound and strong understanding can generate faith, therefore it is said that "Profound Understanding is the cause of faith"

"Joyful Aspiration (Chanda)" is to hope, to intent, to desire, and to wish for the realization of the goal. If there is faith, there must be desire, therefore (the shastra says) "Joyful Aspiration (Chanda) is the fruit of faith". Faith manifests itself from profound understanding and sincere ambition; it originates from reasoning and is able to initiate aspirations.

The essence of Faith is pure mind. It is sincere and innocent good will and admiration. It is a mental power that enables our mind to settle and maintain stillness. This is why Faith is compared to a "clearing pearl" that is able to transform muddy water into clear water. When Faith arises, the mind becomes pure and stable (or calm), it is free from doubt and uncertainty. It can promote sincere veneration for the virtues of the Three Jewels. By understanding the truth and having deep belief, we are bound to be moved to undertake actions to realize the Dharma. This is proof of what Buddha said, that pure faith derives from reasons. It is completely different from theological faith.

學佛三要--信心及其修學

「信」是什麼？以「心淨為性」，這是非常難懂的！要從引發信心的因緣，與信心所起的成果來說明。「深忍」，是深刻的忍可，即「勝解」。由於深刻的有力的理解，能引發信心，所以說「勝解為信因」。「樂欲」，是要實現目的的希求、願望。有信心，必有願欲，所以說「樂欲為信果」。這本來與中山先生的：「有思想而後有信仰，有信仰而後有力量」相近。信心，在這深刻的理解與懇切的欲求中顯出；是從理智所引起，而又能策發意欲的。信以心淨為體性，這是真摯而純潔的好感與景慕；這是使內心歸於安定澄淨的心力，所以說如水清珠的能清濁水一樣。信心一起，心地純淨而安定，沒有疑惑，於三寶充滿了崇仰的真誠。由於見得真，信得切，必然的要求從自己的實踐中去實現佛法。這可見佛說淨信，從理智中來，與神教的信仰，截然不同。

Glossary:

ADHIMOKKHA "Determination", decision, resolve: is one of the mental concomitants (cetasika) and belongs to the Group of Mental Formation (sankhara-kkhandha). In M. 111, it is mentioned together with other mental concomitants.

In later literature it has also the meaning of "faith (saddha)" or conviction.

SADDHA, Faith, Confidence.His faith, however, should be "reasoned and rooted in understanding" ...and he is asked to investigate and test the object of his faith. A Buddhist's faith is not in conflict with the spirit of inquiry, and "doubt about dubitable things" is admitted and inquiry into them is encouraged. The 'Faculty of Faith' should be balanced with that of Wisdom. It is said, "A monk who has understanding, established his faith in accordance with that understanding." Through wisdom and understanding, faith becomes an inner certainty and firm conviction based on one's own experience.

Faith is called the seed of all wholesome states because, according to commentarial explanation, it inspires the mind with confidence and determination (adhimokkha).

From *Buddhist Dictionary*
by Nyanatiloka