

The Buddha's Attitude towards Miracles (*Iddhi*) as represented in Pāli Literature and Mahāyāna Scriptures in Chinese Translations

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Modern science, which dominates the intellectual engagement of people of the contemporary world, does not accept anything outside the sphere of the materialist paradigm of reality. Religious phenomena such as miracles belong to the category which science rejects. The Buddhist traditions of both Theravāda and Mahayāna are not free from elements that could be described as miraculous. The biography of the Buddha is associated with numerous phenomena that fall within the sphere of miracles and the supernatural. The admission of miracles is evident in various *sutta*-s of both Buddhist traditions, Theravāda and Mahayāna. They are referred to in many *sutta*-s in the *Nikāya*-s such as *Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, *Samyutta* and *Aṅguttara* as well as in the Chinese translations of important Mahayāna scriptures such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (Miāofǎ Liánhuā Jīng; Chn. 妙法蓮華經), the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaiṇyāsūtra*, the *Avataṃsakasūtra* (Dàfāngguǎng Fóhuáyán Jīng; Chn. 大方廣佛華嚴經) and the *Lalitavistarasūtra* (Pinyin: Pǔyào Jīng; Chn. 普曜經). There are two contradictory standpoints in some *sutta*-s: the Buddha himself is represented as a performer of miracles and the Buddha is represented as one who attached little value to miracles. Do miracles have a value in modern life? The research aims to clear doubts regarding miracles and show the actual role they play in the Buddhist scriptural traditions of both Theravāda and Mahayāna. One main issue that has to be clarified regarding miracles relates to the possibility of admitting them as a part of the real world. Can they be proved to be true and real? Clarification of matters relating to miracles in Buddhism might be useful in dealing with those who raise doubt and scepticism regarding religious

teachings. Followers of the Buddhist way need to respond appropriately to questions raised in this regard by those of other faiths or secular sceptics. Were miraculous episodes included in the traditional body of literature in order to attract people to the faith? Or does religious discipline in some way transcend the limits of materialism and move to the domain of the supernatural? The concept of miracles in both traditions exists but there are many differences. However, the essences of miracles as well as the role of miracles are quite similar. Miracle should be regarded with an opened-mind instead of suspicion and dispute. Miracles are not a cause leading to enlightenment but they are a result of enlightenment.

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