

Motivation from a Buddhist Perspective

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Motivation means 'the mental process that arouses an organism to action'. Its synonym is need, drive and motive¹. The terms for motivations are rich in Buddhist psychology. The most common of them are cetana- volition /intention; manasikara- attention / reflection; chanda- wish ,want ; saddha – faith or devotion ;raga –lust after ,infatuated by ;tanha – craving ,thirst ; sankappa or vitakka –thought ,intention , asava – influx ,canker ,intoxication. In this paper, we will discuss motivation from three angles psychological, ethical, and stociological approach.

I. Motivation is a complex psychological force

Concerning driving forces, Buddhist terminology classifies them into six roots which bear much ethical connotation? They are; greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), ignorance (*moha*) belong to the immoral causes²; and non-greed (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*), and free from delusion (*amoha*) are the moral causes. Another set of motivations is mentioned in Sigala sutta (*D28*) as fourfold :act motivated by partiality (*chanda*),act motivated by hate (*dosa*), act motivated by confusion (*moha*),and act motivated by fear (*bhaya*);all of them are considered unskillful acts which ultimately lead to downfall.

Intention (*CETANA*) as one of the mental factors is a common factor in every activity of the mind; it is morally neutral. But in some Buddhist societies, like in Myanmar, the word cetana only denotes good intention. Good intention societies, springs from moral roots such as generosity (*alobha*), benevolence (*adosa*),and wisdom (*amoha*),or impartiality or justice, Kind-hearted, clear – minded, and intrepidity. Bad intention is generated in immoral roots and unskillful states of mind. Bad intentions generate bad kamma, such intentions are rooted in greed (*lobha*),hatred (*dosa*)and ignorance (*moha*). They are also called micchasankappa –wrong thoughts that are generally spoken of in three forms ,they are; Kamavitakka –thought of sensuality, Vyapada vitakka –thought of hurting , harming ,vihimsa vitakka –thought of cruelty.³