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 motive. The terms for motivations are rich in Buddhist psychology. The most common of them are cetavolition /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 stocciological 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 causes; 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.