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Iddhipāda: A Study of the Four Iddhipāda from a Secular Perspective

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Introduction

In this world, it is clearly seen that one is different from other; everyone is not the same: the difference between rich and poor, wise and dull, success and failure so on. Why are they different? The reason behind that one becomes a failure is not because of the lack of wish to become a success, but because of the lack of *Iddhipāda*. This can make one different from another.

'*Iddhipāda*' is the mental strength that can make one to be successful and great. There are four '*Iddhipāda*', namely, *Chandiddhipada*, *Vīriyiddhipada*, *Cittiddhipada*, and *Vīmaṃsiddhipada* that can make one different from another. If one possesses these four, he will find the way to success and achieve the aim. Here, the best example is the Buddha. He became the Enlightened One by the power of accomplishment desire. Because of wishing to become the Enlightened One. He sought the ways which made Him to become the Buddha.

Iddhipāda

'*Iddhipāda*' is the mental strength that can make one to be successful and great. There are four '*Iddhipāda*', namely, (1) desire as the base of accomplishment (*Chandiddhipada*), (2) effort as the base of accomplishment (*Vīriyiddhipada*), (3) mind as the base of accomplishment (*Cittiddhipada*), and (4) investigation as the base of accomplishment (*Vīmaṃsiddhipada*) that can make one different from another. If one possesses these four, he will find the way to success and achieve the aim. Here, the best example is the Buddha as he became the Enlightened One by the power of predominant desire.

In daily life, there is a question, that is, by having merely wishing or praying, can one attain one's aim? For example, from a physical perspective, one has a desire to become wealthy, but he is very poor. Why? It is simply because, the desire to become a wealthy one is not strong enough. Actually, he mostly thinks about how to enjoy his life rather than how to make money. When he has spare money, he is most likely to think about where he can go for vacation instead of where to invest his money. If he is wise and kind enough, he may think of donating to charity. So, it is very obvious that one really does not have a strong enough desire to become wealthy although he may wish to be so. Wishing alone leads one nowhere. That is why the Buddha said: "Wealth cannot be made with one's expectation."

If one's desire to be rich is predominant, one will surely find ways and means to be so; one will create opportunities to make money; one will only care about money more than anything else. Then, there will be no reason why one cannot become wealthy. In the same way, if one has a strong desire to be educated, one will surely become educated; if one has a strong desire to become powerful, one will become powerful; if one has a strong desire to attain enlightenment, one will become enlightened and so on. Also, those who would be in future the Omniscient Buddha, the Private Buddha, the chief disciples, the great disciples and ordinary disciples have to fulfill, ardently, their respective perfections attain to their own individual enlightenment with great zeal. Therefore, they become such and such noble men only having fulfilled their respective perfections, but not otherwise. There is desire, effort, mind, investigation which is powerful to come true *Iddhipāda* aim is only called the accomplishment (*Iddhipāda*).

Therefore, it is said in the sub-commentary as follows:

“Chandavato vīriyavato cittavato paññāvato kiṃ nāma kammaṃ na sijjhaṭī’ ti.”

It means that "For one who has a strong desire, effort, mind, and investigation, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished."

Therefore, one who wants to achieve one's aim should strive with predominant desire, predominant effort, etc. until reach its fruition. If one has a predominant desire to become an accomplished person, he thinks that "If I do not attain this accomplishment in this life, I shall not rest content. It is better that I die rather than that I shall not attain it." He wants to find out the way, to learn various subjects, to read the book written by skillful author, to discuss with the sage, and so on. But it is not possible to perform these activities only with desire. Therefore, after having the predominant desire to do any activities, predominant effort is a necessary factor to accomplish this desire. One cannot continue the great task without predominant effort.

Those who are weak in effort recoil from their task when confronted with work requiring great effort. They shrink when told that they will have to stay apart from friends and associates. They shrink from the prospect of the necessity to be frugal in sleep and food. They shrink from the prospect of long periods of concentration. They resemble 'white dogs that dare not venture into thickets. White dogs are afraid to enter

bushes of reeds that are no more than a cubit high because they think that the bushes might harbor leopards, tigers, and elephants.

A person with the predominant effort is infused with the thought that the aim can ever be accomplished by effort. One cannot be discouraged even though it is said to him that he must undergo great hardships or he must put forth effort for many days, months and years. He cannot be discouraged even though he actually has to put forth effort for such long periods.

The rich, the intelligentsia, etc. achieved their aim because of trying with the great effort after their wish. To achieve the aim is not so easy: if it is easy, everyone will reach the goal. It is mostly to give up easily when one faces with the problem and difficulties. Instead, it needs to be strong enough mind in such situation. One needs to control one's mind firmly not to stop until reaching one's aim. This strong mind will help one to arouse the effort again and again.

Although there is the predominant desire, effort that support by hook or by crook, and strong mind, it is not possible without wisdom. One has to investigate with wisdom that it is right or wrong, it is wholesome or unwholesome and so on. One will perform unwholesome deeds that can give evil results without wisdom to accomplish the aim. If one had the wisdom which can clearly discern between right and wrong, this wisdom can lead one to choose the correct ways concerning their aim. Therefore, the Buddha preached *Iddhipāda* as the chief of all attainments.

Among the four '*Iddhipāda*', only predominant wisdom enables to see thing tightly. The rest three cannot see properly. They serve to attain the aim whether associated Dhamma is wholesome or unwholesome. As a result of wholesome and unwholesome deed there are many differences even between identical twins that are born and brought up with the same heredity and environment. Although they have similar appearance and features, one may be brainier, healthier or more fortunate than the other. Moreover, there are points to ponder: why not the other kinds; why one was born as men or women, why not otherwise; why one was born with a particular talent and aptitude, why are others not born with these; why one gets opportunities to be successful in life, why do others not have the same. These are points to ponder beyond one's heredity and environment.

Therefore, wisdom is the main factor for good achievement. *Chanda*, *Vīriya*, and *Citta* without wisdom are unable to bring all being to take good achievement themselves. Thus, before doing something, one should contemplate with wisdom: it is right or wrong, it is suitable or unsuitable, and so on.

According to the Buddha's teachings, there are three kinds of wisdom:

- i. *Sutamaya paññā*
- ii. *Cintamaya paññā* and
- iii. *Bhāvanamaya paññā*

Sutamaya panna means knowledge gained by listening to the wise who talks either on their own or at one's request when one is unable to think out or reason by oneself. The Buddha regards the Sutamaya panna as the basic wisdom. This is because in this world, one who has not yet acquired the basic wisdom cannot know anything through thinking it out for himself; he has to learn it first from the wise by listening to them.

Cintamaya panna means the knowledge gained by reasoning power that enables one to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, or wholesome and unwholesome.

Bhāvanamaya panna means the knowledge gained at the time when one is actually experiencing the *Jhāna* (concentration of mind) or *Phala* (the happiness of fruition). It is the most superior knowledge because it sees the truth beyond illusions and perceptions.

After having studied the four of *Iddhipāda*, obviously, it can be seen that *Iddhipāda* makes all beings to attain their aim. That is why, who want to take an achievement or famous in life have to strive to '*Iddhipāda*'. There are, however, good and bad achievement and also good and bad famous in business, social affairs, education, and so on. Although it can be said that good achievement and famous are due to striving with *Iddhipāda*, bad achievement and famous are due to the lack of '*Iddhipāda*' and due to striving with '*Iddhipāda*'.

The best example of '*Iddhipāda*' can be seen in the life of the Buddha and Devadatta. The Buddha was famous in good ways and gained the highest aim because. He applied the four '*Iddhipāda*' properly. But Devadatta was famous in bad ways. It is not because of the lack of '*Iddhipāda*'. Devadatta had a strong enough desire to be famous and made great effort to get it in various ways. But he could not apply the effort tightly because of unknowing that it is right or wrong; it is suitable or unsuitable. In consequence of this wrongdoing, he was famous as a wicked person.

Therefore, the important point is that getting good achievement in life requires to apply the *Chanda*, *Vīriya*, etc. properly. Here, mere *Chanda*, *Vīriya*, *Citta*, and *Vīmaṃsa* are not '*Iddhipāda*'; predominant. '*Iddhipāda*' is that the *Chanda*, *Vīriya*, *Citta* and *Vīmaṃsa* which is strong enough and can lead to accomplish one's aim. One can never accomplish one's aim with a lesser *Chanda*, *Vīriya*, *Citta*, and *Vīmaṃsa* just as a deer cannot automatically enter into the mouth of a sleeping lion.

All beings who are living on earth today will be gone within one hundred years. They are all dreamlike figures. And also, they are just guests in this world like a seasonal insect that appears and disappears after a short while. In the ultimate sense, all beings die and are reborn at every moment because all the mental and physical phenomena are identified by the nature of arising and passing away at every moment. It is common sense and indisputable that our world itself will disappear one day. So, what we call achievements or accomplishments in this world is just perception (*Paññatti*); claiming something to be one's own is just ignorance (*Moha*); thinking of oneself or someone else as to be beautiful or ugly is just delusion (*Vipallasa*). That is why, the Buddha said in *Vipallasa Sutta*; "one becomes crazy under illusions created by the false

notion, false thought, and false belief. Seeing things correctly, one can escape the bond of death". This kind of knowledge is *Bhāvanamaya* Panna, the highest wisdom for all beings.

So, one needs the knowledge that can help one to see the truth beyond illusions and perceptions. After having this knowledge, one is able to control oneself in good things. *Chanda*, *Vīriya*, and *Citta* controlled by wisdom will lead one to success in business, social affairs, education etc., in this very life and finally, one will attain the final liberation (*Nibbāna*)

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