

Faith and the Buddhist Path

Kadampa Center, September 13, 2023

Faith and the Buddhist Path

- **Introduction**
- What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?
- What is non-faith and what is its function in Buddhism?
- What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?
- Exploring an example of faith applied to our practice

Introduction

Some dictionary definitions of “faith”:

- *Belief that does not rest on logical truth or material evidence.*
- *A set of religious doctrines; a body of dogma.*
- *The theological virtue defined as secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God’s will.*

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Introduction

Some dictionary definitions of “faith”:

- *Confident or unquestioning belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea or thing.*

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Introduction

In my understanding, whether faith is connected to a deity or not, its essence lies in trusting ourselves to discover the deepest truths on which we can rely.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (p. xiii). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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Introduction

I want to invite a new use of the word faith, one that is not associated with a dogmatic religious interpretation or divisiveness. I want to encourage delight in the word, to help reclaim faith as fresh, vibrant, intelligent, and liberating.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (p. xiv). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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Introduction

This is a faith that emphasizes a foundation of love and respect for ourselves. It is a faith that uncovers our connection to others, rather than designating anyone as separate and apart.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (p. xiv). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

A Buddhist definition of “faith”:

A distinct mental factor that, when referring to such things as the law of cause and effect, the Triple Gem and so forth, produces a joyous state of mind free from the turmoil of the root and proximate afflictions.

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What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

A Buddhist definition of “faith”:

It has the function of (a) acting as the basis for generating an aspiration for wholesome qualities that have not yet been generated and (b) increasing any such aspiration already generated. In brief, it acts as the doorway through which all positive qualities manifest.

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What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

In Pali, the language of the original Buddhist texts, the word usually translated as faith, confidence, or trust is *saddha*. *Saddha* literally means “to place the heart upon.” To have faith is to offer one’s heart or give over one’s heart.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (p. 12). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

The “unbearable sequence of sheer happenings” that had been my life began to come together in the teachings of the Buddha, and I was ready to place my heart upon those teachings. Perhaps I already had.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (p. 12). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

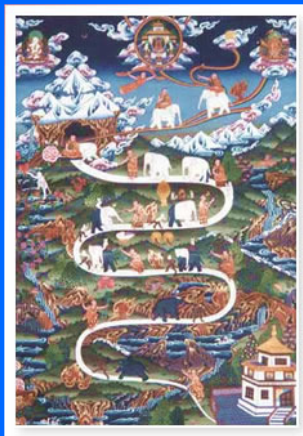
The promise of happiness had touched a place within me so deep and unknown that what it had awakened there was wild, inchoate, primal. I recognize that now as the stirring of faith.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (p. 12). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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What is faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

Effort
↑
Aspiration
↑
Faith



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What is non-faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

A Buddhist definition of “non-faith”:

A mental factor that, since it causes one to have no belief in or respect for that which is worthy of confidence – such as the law of actions and their results – is the complete opposite of faith.

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What is non-faith and what is its function in Buddhism?

A Buddhist definition of “non-faith”:

It has the function of acting as the basis for laziness and of causing the power of faith to decrease. In addition, it makes one disbelieve, disrespect and have no desire for that which is positive, thus severing the roots of any wholesome development.

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

When divided, faith is of three types:

- (1) clarifying faith,
- (2) faith of conviction and
- (3) wishing faith.

A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors

by Ye-she Gyel-tsen

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

(1) **Clarifying faith** is a clear mind engendered by seeing the excellent qualities of those so endowed, such as the Three Jewels. Why is it called "clarifying"? For example, when one places a water-purifying gem in dirty water, the murkiness of the water is immediately cleared away.

A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors

by Ye-she Gyel-tsen

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

Similarly, when this faith is generated, the murkiness of the mind is cleared away, whereupon all excellent qualities of realization become suitable to arise in one's continuum.

A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors

by Ye-she Gyel-tsen

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

(2) **Faith of conviction** is the gaining of conviction through contemplating the modes of dependent-arising, cause and result, and so forth that are taught by the Conqueror.

A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors

by Ye-she Gyel-tsen

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

(3) **Wishing faith**, is, for instance, having contemplated the modes of the four noble truths, ascertained true sufferings and true origins as objects of abandonment, and true cessations and true paths as objects of attainment, and having understood that these can be attained if one makes the proper effort, the faith thinking, "I shall definitely obtain them."

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by Ye-she Gyel-tsen

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

The three types of wisdom:

- (1) wisdom arising from listening
- (2) wisdom arising from contemplation
- (3) wisdom arising from meditation

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What are the types of faith and what role do they play in our practice of Buddhism?

The three levels of phenomena and how they are realized:

- (1) **manifest phenomena** known through valid direct perception
- (2) **slightly hidden phenomena** known through the power of fact
- (3) **extremely hidden phenomena** known through the power of belief

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Exploring an example of faith applied to our practice

The four noble truths:

- (1) The truth of *dukkha*
- (2) The truth of the origins or causes of *dukkha*
- (3) The truth of the cessation of *dukkha* and its causes
- (4) The truth of the path that leads to the cessation of *dukkha* and its causes

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Thank you!