

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of the concept of making prophecy, known as Vyākaraṇa, in Theravada Buddhism. The finding of this study indicates that, according to the evidence in Theravada Buddhism, prophecies can be categorized into 3 groups according to the meaning of the prophecies; the prophecies which is made as a prediction, the prophecies which is made to answer questions and the prophecies which is made through the supreme knowledge of the Lord Buddha.

The prophecy which is made as a prediction is a forecast of the events in the past, present and future through various types of knowledge; such as, body part reading, dream interpretation, appearance character reading, land characteristic reading, house characteristic reading, animal characteristic reading, zodiac interpretation and luck forecast. However, this type of prophecy is considered as Tiracchanavijja, a low art, which is inventions out of Buddhism orientation and considered unworthy. If a person earns a living from this type of knowledge, it can be said that the person is living of misappropriate assets and consumables. Therefore, this Tiracchanavijja is completely refrained from the Lord Buddha, Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni. If any Bhikku or Bhikkhuni use this knowledge, they are considered misbehaved according to the Sikkhapada. This type of prophecy is also claimed to obstruct the achievement of Nibbana.

For the prophecy which is made to answer questions, it is found that there are questions which the Lord Buddha answered because the questions are beneficial and can contribute to the reach of the Four Noble Truths. The questions were answered in order to help people stopping Dhukka, the suffering, which does not benefit life at all. Some questions were left unanswered due to the fact that they are asked on the basis of Micchaditthi or the wrong view, particularly that the self exists. There are not any essence and the Truth underlying this view and it is also not contributing to prohibition of lust. It is not useful for life and, most importantly, not leading to the Noble Eightfold Path to the Nibbana.

The prophecy which is made through the supreme knowledge of the Lord Buddha is the prophecy confirmed by the supreme knowledge of the Lord Buddha. It is interesting that not any mistake is found in the prophecies. There are also some patterns of relationship in the prophecies which makes this type of prophecy different from other types of prophecies. The fact that the life of each individual goes according to the prophecy make it seemed like the past, present and future are already written. It leads to an understanding which is against one of the most important principles in Buddhism, Karma and the Three Characteristics. This understanding could be interpreted in the way that life goes according to the prophecy because life is predetermined by the power of god or Karma from the past life. With that understanding, people may not believe in the ability to make changes in life because the Lord Buddha has already made the prophecy. It is impossible to change as they don't have the power to control their lives. With the understanding that life cannot be controlled, the way of life to be is permanent and, as the way of life is permanent, self exists as the owner of that life and the Lord Buddhas can make correct prophecies due to the access of this power.

The researcher has proven this understanding to be misinterpreted from the Theravada Buddhism perspective. The understandings are the belief that the power of god or the power of Karma from the past life control the way of this life, the belief that human do not possess the ability to make changes in life and be responsible for their lives and the belief that life is permanent and there is a self which controls life and take the consequences of the Karma. When these beliefs are applied to consideration of the prophecies made through the Supreme Knowledge, the contradiction appears. On the other hand, the right perspective is the wisdom which is the Lord Buddha's omniscience, known as Sabbaññutañāna. The Lord Buddha is omniscient by the realisation of the truth that human is the controller of their lives. All the possibilities in their lives are the causal condition from the action of the action in the past and present time. As human is the controller of their lives, the lack of responsibilities for their own action will not occur and life can be controlled by determining the appropriate causal conditions. At the same time, they are also aware that some things in life cannot be

controlled when Karma is taking its consequences and it was the time to take responsibility to their own action in the past. He also knows the way of nature that things have cause and effect which are interdependent. Things which are overtly created are then impermanent and there is not any self to control its way of being and to take actions and consequence of the actions. Knowing the truth of life makes the prophecies made by the Supreme Knowledge correct and in harmony with Karma and the Three Characteristics.