

THE PERFECTION OF RESOLVE:  
Quotes on ethics from the Theravada Tradition

*Adhitthāna*: resolve, determination, sustaining or determining power

From *A Treatise on the Paramis* by Dhammapala:

[The fulfillment of the perfection is dependent on utmost dedication (*adhikara*) and strong desire (*chandata*).]

Resolve has the characteristic of being resolved on the requisites of Awakening (e.g. the perfections); its function is to overcome their opposites; its manifestation is being unshakeable in that task.... Without firmly, vigorously, and persistently undertaking the perfections and maintaining an unshakeable resolve when encountering their opposites, the perfections as requisites of Awakening do not arise. ...

Whoever has an aspiration for full Awakening should, for the sake of fulfilling the perfections, always be devoted to what is proper and intent on service. He or she should be zealous in providing for the welfare of beings, and from time to time, day by day, should reflect, "Have I accumulated merit and knowledge today? What have I done for the welfare of others?"...

The primary condition of the perfections is great aspiration expressed as "Having crossed over I will cross [others] over; being free I will free others, tamed I will tame others, calmed will calm others, comforted I will comfort others, having attained nirvana I will lead others to, nirvana, purified I will purify others, awakened I will awaken."

From the Suttas:

These are the four resolves: the resolve for wisdom, the resolve for truth, the resolve for relinquishment, and the resolve for peace. ... One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train in peace.

Middle Length Discourses 140

Though skin sinews and bones wither away, though flesh and blood of my body dry up, I shall not give up my efforts till I have attained whatever is attainable by heroic perseverance, energy and endeavor.

The Buddha

Middle Length Discourses 70 -----

----- *The Mahayana list of the ten paramitas differs from the Theravada list. In place of the Perfection of Resolve, the Mahayana list has the Perfection of Aspiration/Vow (pranidhana). The quintessential Vow is the Four Bodhisattva Vows:*

Beings are numberless, I vow to convey them [to liberation].  
Delusions are inexhaustible I vow to end them.  
Dharma gates are boundless, I vow to enter them.  
Buddha's way is unsurpassable, I vow to become it.