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Articles and Books for Review should be sent to: Seth Evans

The International Buddhist Studies College, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University,
79 Moo 1 Lamsai, Wangnoi, Ayutthaya 13170, Thailand (email: iabu.ibsc@yahoo.com)

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PROLOGUE

It is my great pleasure to launch this being Vol. 3 No. 2, the second edition of The Journal of International Buddhist Studies College of 2017.

The International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC) has developed this journal in accordance with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) requirement that all M.A. and Ph.D. students submit articles for publication in journals that are accepted into the TCI (Thai-Journal Citation Index Centre) before graduation.

IBSC, which began operations in July of 2014, offers Master of Art degrees as well as Doctor of Philosophy degrees in both Buddhist Studies and Peace Studies and carries an impressive international Buddhist community. We hold that this community is the future of Buddhism and we are very proud of their success, both in education and in the teaching of the Buddha.

The aim of this journal is to be a peer-reviewed source of Buddhist knowledge not only for the university and the Kingdom of Thailand, but for the whole world. Here, IBSC students and scholars can discuss various issues regarding Buddhist Studies in the English medium and in doing so, fulfill the requirements of the HEC. This journal hopes to continue the excellence of IBSC academics in a published forum that will uphold the high standards of an MCU education.

JIBSC will be a key supporter of the “Quality Development Policy of Higher Education” of the HEC through distinction in publication by offering articles that discuss intelligent and relevant issues facing Buddhism in this modern day and age. I want to thank all contributors, not only to this issue, but future ones. It is my hope that the journal will bring high quality articles to the world, but more importantly, spread the Dhamma through scholarly excellence.

Contributors:

Dr. Boonmee Pansa, Lecturer Education Faculty, MCU
Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury, Ph.D. Candidate, IBSC
Seth Evans, Guest Lecturer,, Assumption University
Phramaha Suddhiyano, Lecturer Education Faculty, MCU
Ven. W. Piyaratana, Lecturer Buddhism Faculty, MCU
Ven. Visddha, Researcher, Wat Dhammakaya
Dr. Niraj Ruangsarn, Khon Kean, MCU



Phra Rajapariyatkavi
Editor, JIBSC

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THE BEST LEADERSHP BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA



Dr. Boonmee Pansa
Mr. Kittisak Na Songkla

ABSTRACT

Regarding the theory of leadership, there six approaches; namely, Trait Theory, Transformational Theory, Contingency Theories, Situational Theories, and Behavioral Theories Participative Theories. As for the concept of the Buddhist leadership, it is exemplified in the life of the Buddha has many unique features in addition to the usual leadership qualities that social-psychologists enlist today. With this, Buddha never gave the impression to his followers that he was imposing leadership on them. He wanted maintain that there was the possibility to his followers to attain the same heights and become his equals. The role he wanted to play was that of a kind teacher who showed the way for excellence which was not an impossible goal for the followers.

Keywords: Leadership, Buddha's teaching.

INTRODUCTION

When a herd of cows are swimming to the further bank, if the leader is going astray, so are all the other cows. Just as this is true of cows, so too it is true of humans. If he who has been made leader conducts himself wrongfully, nothing needs to be said about all his subjects. If a king does not establish himself righteously, the entire state will live in misery.

When a herd of cows are swimming to the further bank, if the leader is going straight, so are all the other cows. Just as this is true of cows, so too it is true of humans. If he who has been made leader conducts himself rightfully, nothing needs to be said about all his subjects. If a king is righteous, the entire state will live happily¹

In the twentieth century, many educators have researched leadership contexts and theoretical foundations of leadership. However, most theories on and research about leadership look at how a person gains understanding of the values, beliefs, and attitudes of people from different cultures and define leadership as typified in the traits, qualities, and behaviours of the leader. Some argue that leadership is a process. Leadership is a process, not a position or a characteristic, but a transactional event that occurs between leaders and followers.²

It is evident from the available literature, the Buddha has very clearly addressed many of the modern management and leadership concepts more than 2500 years ago. Buddhism has its own unique leadership theories and practices which has evolved over a long period of time. The Buddha has preached many a theories and concepts of management and leadership in his 45 years of Buddhahood.³ It has also been evident from the available literature that there was a well-developed administration system for Sangha

¹Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto), **The Nectar of Truth: A Selection of Buddhist Aphorisms**, 9Bangkok: Pet and Home Publishing, 2013), p. 56.

²Bass, B.M., **Handbook of leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research**, (New York: Free Press, 1990), p. 324.

³Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009), p. 246.

community. The Buddha himself is a visionary leader and has been recognized as one of the greatest leader of all time.

THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

“The role and responsibilities of leaders in organizations has undergone some radical changes over the last 100 years. Evolving from the strong-armed bosses of early entrepreneurial capitalism to bureaucrats whose authority rested in their organizational position, to leaders who have to find new ways to convince employees to follow them in the quick-changing information era, the challenges and opportunities for leadership is perhaps now greater than ever.”⁴

Leadership has been described as “a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”; Although there are alternative definitions of leadership. For example, some understand a leader simply as somebody whom people follow, or as somebody who guides or directs others, while others define leadership as “organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal”. There have been a number of approaches and theories that concern leadership. Early theories focused on characteristics of leaders, while later theories focused on leader behavior, and conditions under which individuals can be effective. Studies of leadership have produced theories involving traits, situational interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values, charisma, and intelligence, among others. Some leadership approaches and theories include:

Trait Theory

A trait can be thought of as a relatively stable characteristic that causes individuals to behave in certain ways.⁵ The trait approach to personality is one of the major theoretical areas in the study of personality. The trait theory suggests that individual personalities are composed of these broad dispositions. Unlike many other theories of personality, such as psychoanalytic or humanistic theories, the trait approach to personality is focused on differences between individuals. The combination and interaction of various traits forms a

⁴DuBrin, A. J., **2Leadership**, (New Delhi: Biztantra, 2005), p. 54.

⁵Gopalakrishna, D., **Buddhism and Contemporary Management**, (Colombo: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 2006), p. 214.

personality that is unique to each individual. Trait theory is focused on identifying and measuring these individual personality characteristics.

Transformational Theory

The concept of transformational leadership was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer James Mac Gregor Burns. According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when “leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation.” Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work towards common goals.⁶

Contingency Theories

Contingency theories of leadership focus on particular variables related to the environment that might determine which particular style of leadership is best suited for the situation. According to this theory, no leadership style is best in all situations. Success depends upon a number of variables, including the leadership style, qualities of the followers and aspects of the situation.

Situational Theories

Situational theories propose that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variables.⁷ Different styles of leadership may be more appropriate for certain types of decision-making. For example, in a situation where the leader is the most knowledgeable and experienced member of a group an authoritarian style might be most appropriate. In other instances where group members are skilled experts, a democratic style would be more effective.

Behavioral Theories

Behavioral theories of leadership are based upon the belief that great leaders are made, not born. Consider it the flip-side of the Great Man theories. Rooted in behaviorism, this leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders not on mental qualities or internal

⁶Kalupahana, David. J., **Path of Morals - Dhammapada**, (Colombo Buddhist Cultural Centre, 2008) p. 57.

⁷Kalupahana, David. J., **Buddhist Philosophy**, (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977), p. 143.

states. According to this theory, people can learn to become leaders through teaching and observation.⁸

Participative Theories

Participative leadership theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. These leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process.⁹ In participative theories, however, the leader retains the right to allow the input of others.

In today's management, leadership plays an important role in shaping and managing the organization. Focus on leadership theories shifted from one dimension of leadership to other. First it is focused on the psychological characteristic and traits and then shifted to behavioral theories which identified as the criteria that could influence subordinates and bring the desired results. In a rapidly changing competitive business environment it is the people who could drive the organization towards achieving its objectives and goals. In the 21st century, survival become synonymous with change. Change will no longer be a matter of choice but an inevitable fact that must be dealt with. Leadership is not about standing still and leadership is about change.¹⁰ Practical leadership understands the most powerful ingredient in any form of social interactions. The human factor in change is about understanding, accepting, cooperating, motivating and respecting people in any social environment. It is about treating people rights and their confidence. Effective leadership requires the right behavior, skills and attitudes and the bottom line of practical leadership is about building relationships that eventually lead to optimum human performances.

A leader needs to have knowledge, rather be more aware than the rest of the people; he could keep followers cool in adverse situations, and care for the welfare of his followers. A group of college students were recently asked to make a list of qualities they

⁸Narada, Ven. Maha Thera, **The Buddha and His Teachings**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), p. 376.

⁹Perera, I., **Kalamanakarana Sankalpa – Bauddha Praveshayak**, (Nugegoda: Quality Printers, 2007), p. 32.

¹⁰Quek, J., **The Buddha's Techniques and Practice of Counselling as depicted in the Pali Canon**, (Singapore: Kep Media International Pte Ltd., 2007) p. 213.

would expect from a leader. The list they made consisted of Integrity, Vision, Strategy, Effective Communication, Persuasion, Adaptability, Generosity, Motivation, Teamwork, Sense of Humour, Decision Making, Creativity, Flexibility, Sympathy, Dedication and Amenability to Reason as the most vital for a leader. Leadership is indeed a challenging responsibility.¹¹

BUDDHIST LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS

A leader should have a vision and a mission, the most essential ingredient in leadership, according to modern leadership thinkers. A vision is a clear picture of the future. It defines what one wants to become or achieve as a goal. The Buddha's vision was very clearly stated from the time he was just a Bodhi-aspirant. As implied in his aspiration made at the feet of the Buddha Dipankara, he wanted to become himself enlightened, get free from life-death continuum and make others also enlightened and free. He made it a reality after a long and arduous journey through Samsara. Despite much hardships and setbacks the Buddha never veered from his course but persevered until he achieved his goal, the Enlightenment. Guided by his vision he made an inclusive mission of helping everyone in the universe to live a happier life. His mission was stated to Mara, the evil one, when he responded to his invitation to an early Nibbana. He stated that he wanted to create a four-fold following, comprising of laymen, laywomen, monks and nuns, who, having learned the Dhamma and Vinaya well, practice it, teach it and respond critically to any distortion of the message. It was a mission based on universal love and wisdom.¹²

The Buddhist concept of leadership as it is exemplified in the life of the Buddha has many unique features in addition to the usual leadership qualities that social-psychologists enlist today. The most important was that the Buddha never gave the impression to his followers that he was imposing leadership on them. He wanted maintain that there was the possibility to his followers to attain the same heights and become his equals. The role he wanted to play was that of a kind teacher who showed the way for

¹¹ Ven. Dhammananda, K. Sri, **What Buddhist Believe**, (Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1998) p. 289.

¹² Walshe, M., **The Long Discourses of the Buddha**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), p. 365.

excellence which was not an impossible goal for the followers.¹³

The Buddha wanted the leadership to be felt in a subtle and non-inflicting manner. This is underscored in the Buddha's respond to Ananda's request on 'saying something' on (the future of) the Sangha. The Buddha, having understood that the request of Ananda meant an appointment of a future leader, said: "Ananda, it never occurred to me that the monks are dependent on me or I am governing the Sangha. Whatever teachings I have given them and the rules of discipline I have instituted may become their leader." This should not be taken as an excuse made to avoid a leadership struggle since the Buddha had made this stand even prior to this. When he addressed the first sixty Arahants before sending them to the world at large he said: "I am freed from all shackles, human and divine; you also have freed yourself from all shackles, human and divine." This shows that the Buddha wanted to treat the followers who had attained the goal as his equals. Where the difference wanted to be shown he chose the narrowest, stating that he was *maggakkhayī* (the one who gave road directions) while the followers were *magganuga* (who trod the path). Thus, he instills confidence in the follower convincing that he has respectable recognition from the master. This, in effect, helps to develop appreciation and love towards the master in the minds of the followers.¹⁴

The Buddha advised first 60 arahant disciples who embark on the first mission of preaching dhamma as follows:

*"Cartha bhikkhave carikam bahujanahitaya bahujanasukhaya lokanukampaya
atthaya, hitaya sukhaya devamanussanam"*

- i. All of you are free from snares,
- ii. Should travel for the benefit and happiness of many beings,
- iii. Should not go together,
- iv. Should teach dhamma which is good from beginning to end and which is endowed with meaning and form,
- v. Should illuminate the holy life which is complete and pure,

¹³Prof Chandima Wijebandara. **The Buddha's concept of leadership**. Accessed on 19 April 2017, from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/opinion/aec/30286428>.

¹⁴Goldstein, J., & Kornfield, J., **Seeking the heart of wisdom: The path of insight meditation**, (Boston: MA: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1987), p. 65.

- vi. Reach the beings with little defilements and those who will understand dhamma, otherwise they will deteriorate because of not hearing dhamma.

When analysed the above instructions and guidelines one could clearly see a number of leadership attributes. First, the Buddha built confidence and motivate them and then gave very clear instructions as to what they should do. Subsequently, the Buddha delegated not only the responsibility but authority as well when laid down the rule of “tisaranagamana”, permitting arahants to ordain who wished to join the Buddhist sangha.

In Kalama Sutta, the Buddha explained how one should take a decision by analyzing and evaluating the situation:

“Do not believe in anything (simply) because you have heard it. Do not believe in tradition because they have handed down for many generations. Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumoured by many. Do not believe in anything (simply) because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all then accept it and live up to it.”¹⁵

Leadership is always decision making and the success of the leadership depend on to the extent of one makes decisions and the effectiveness of them. The above guides you as to how one should comprehend a situation and take the correct decision.¹⁶

THE BODHISATTVA LEADERSHIP MODEL: LEADING WITHOUT A LEADER

In Buddhism there are said to be five hindrances to becoming a balanced and aware individual, whether as a leader or follower. These are: 1) attachment to sense pleasure; 2) aversion to people, objects and inner states; 3) sloth and torpor (laziness in the

¹⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, (Kandy: Wisdom). p. 280.

¹⁶ Hanh, T. N., *Teachings on love*, (Berkeley: CA: Parallax Press, 1997). p. 24.

body and mind); 4) restlessness, in behavior and the mind; and 5) doubt that events are going to be realized as planned or according to intentions and wishes. These hindrances, when operating, prevent leaders, as well as other members of organizations, from being objective, i.e., from perceiving situations accurately. There are also found to be seven factors of enlightenment, which are identified as: 1) mindfulness; 2) effort and energy; 3) investigation; 4) interest; 5) concentration; 6) tranquility; and 7) equanimity. Each of these factors are qualities of mind that when cultivated in daily life are found to affect profoundly an individual's relationship to the world around them. When present or developed they increase the ability of individuals to be more empathic, more present in their activities, more energized at work and more satisfied and, hence, to be effective in a wide range of work roles, especially leadership roles. The five hindrances, when they are absent or attenuated, cease to result in negative emotional and mental states such as boredom and lack of clarity. When operating they decrease the effectiveness of the individual in the workplace, and more generally in life.¹⁷

LEADERSHIP AND THE FOUR POSITIVE STATES OF MIND (BRAMAVIHARAS)

An examination of the Buddhist worldview as it informs leadership theory and practice would be incomplete without a discussion of what are called the “four immeasurable states of mind” (Brahmaviharas). The four states, or Brahmaviharas, are love, compassion, joy and equanimity.

During the lifetime of the Buddha, those of the Brahmanic (Hindu) faith prayed that after death they would go to Heaven to dwell eternally with Brahma, the universal God. One day a Brahman man asked the Buddha, “What can I do to be sure that I will be with Brahma after I die?” and the Buddha replied, “As Brahma is the source of Love, to dwell with him you must practice the Brahmaviharas — love, compassion, joy and equanimity”.

Although Buddhism is a non-theistic religion, the Buddha adapted the language of his advice to the experience and mindset of those he conversed with, adopting “skillful means” to convey his message. The result is an intimate connection between spiritual terms

¹⁷Goldstein, J., **One dharma: The emerging western Buddhism**, (San Francisco: Harper, 2002), p. 231.

in the two languages. In Sanskrit a vihara is a dwelling place or abode. Love, in Sanskrit, is maitri; in Pali it is metta, often translated into English more precisely as loving-kindness. Compassion is karuna in both languages. Joy is mudita. Equanimity is upeksha in Sanskrit and upekkha in Pali. The Brahmaviharas are, thus, the four elements of true love, which are deemed “immeasurable” because they are said to grow in strength daily if one practices them, and that eventually they will come to encompass a person’s entire being as well as the being of those around them. It is believed that everyone will become happier and more peaceful in the presence of those who cultivate these states of mind.

According to Nagarjuna, a Buddhist philosopher (d. ca. 200 A.D.): “Practicing the Immeasurable Mind of Love extinguishes anger in the hearts of living beings...Practicing the Immeasurable Mind of Equanimity extinguishes hatred, aversion, and attachment in the hearts of living beings” (Mahaprajna-paramita Shastra, quoted in Hanh, 1997, p. 2).

Essentially in Buddhism, a leader can be effective only if he or she not only practices but also embodies the viharas as appropriate to the situation from moment-to-moment in everyday life. Here we see a truly dynamic, moment-by-moment, contingency theory of leadership based on the on-going inner spiritual practice of love, compassion, heart-felt joy and equanimity (inner and outer balance) in everyday life. Such a contingency theory of leadership, we argue, is more encompassing in its reach than prior contingency theories, which are based solely on outer behavior.

An illustration of non-dual leadership in Buddhism (Level 1), is graphically described in one of the sutra of the Buddha where he describes the qualities of a bodhisattva, an individual who intentionally forgoes nirvana (final enlightenment) out of compassion for all sentient beings:

*During the short eons of swords, They meditate on love,
Introducing to nonviolence, In the middle of great battles,
They remain impartial to both sides, For bodhisattvas of great strength,
In order to help all living beings, They voluntarily descend into
The hells (negative states) which are attached*

CONCLUSION

Modern management deals with management of behavior of the people. It is a management of individual, group and organizational behavior which is aimed at transforming the inputs into value added outputs. The positive behavior which is cultivated through learning, motivation, team-building, leadership, training and development will transform an ordinary organization into a world class organization. The driving force behind the success of any organization is the leadership. In today's challenging and turbulent business environment organizations need leaders of high caliber and the positive change in behavior of people through moral conduct according to dhamma is of permanent nature and everlasting.

People in Buddhist countries practice mindfulness to develop their concentration (Samadhi) then they hope to achieve wisdom (Panna). The Buddhist concept of leadership could be crystallized from the way of the Buddha provided training opportunities for his followers. He believed that the juniors should respect and learn from the seniors. There were eighty senior monks that the Buddha had identified as specialists in various fields. Their personal integrity and attainments were such that he reminded the others that there were much for them to learn from such senior monks. Once, the Buddha extolled Sariputta and Moggallana as the measures of ideal behaviour. This again shows another leadership quality implied in Buddhism. The leaders should train others also for leadership. They must see their talents, appreciate and encourage them and introduce to others too. When enlisting the duties of teachers the Buddha said a good teacher introduce his students to his colleagues. There were occasions that the Buddha deputized capable senior followers to undertake the responsibility of training junior disciples and observed their activities.

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AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF EMPTYNESS (SŪNYATĀ) DOCTRINE AND ITS CONNECTION WITH DEPENDENT ORIGINATION



Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is an attempt to analyze the concept of emptiness from the early Buddhist teachings to subsequent Buddhist developmental schools, namely, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Schools. An examination of an insightful bridge between the Buddha's major teaching on dependent origination and the notion of emptiness will also be attempted.

The initial part of this qualitative research will focus on the etymological term of emptiness (*sūnyatā*) and the Buddha's teaching of emptiness from the Early Buddhist standpoint. Next, this research will seek to explain the concept of emptiness in the Madhyamaka School and Yogācāra School. This study will further demonstrates the eradication of suffering is what is meant by the understanding of the concept emptiness from an ultimate standpoint which concerns a connection to the Buddha's central teaching of Dependent Origination.

Keywords: Emptiness, Early Buddhism, Madhyama, Yogācara, Dependent Origination

INTRODUCTION

The concept of ‘Emptiness’ (Skt. *Śūnyatā*) is a popular term in Buddhism especially connected to the Madhyamaka School which was founded by Ācārya Nāgārjuna. According to the Pāli Canon, it is quite evident that the Buddha used the term ‘emptiness’ (*Śūnyatā*) several times in order to make a clear doctrinal exposition towards his followers and disciples. For instance, in the Mahāli Sutta, Poṭṭhapāda Sutta and Mahānidāna Sutta from Dīgha Nikāya; in the Āneñjasappāya sutta, Cūḷa-suññata Sutta, Maha-suññata Sutta and Aggivacchagotta Sutta from Majjhima Nikāya; in the Vacchagotta Sutta from Saṃyutta Nikāya; Avyākata Sutta from Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Blessed One used the word ‘emptiness’ for explaining metaphorical doctrinal teachings such as non-self, an object of mindful meditation, and the universe and the world itself. In addition, the Buddha’s teaching on Dependent Origination (Pali: *paṭiccasamuppāda*; Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*) is the most fundamental doctrine, which he contrived at the eve of Enlightenment. Ācārya Nāgārjuna was the first saint who stated a subtle insightful relationship between the Buddha’s central doctrine of Dependent Origination and the concept of emptiness in his monumental text, the Mūlamadhyamakārikā¹.

The object of this paper is to analyze the concept of emptiness from the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Schools and propose a connection between the concept and Dependent Origination.

ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM SŪNYATĀ (EMPTINESS)

The word ‘*śūnyatā*’ is the Śanskrit term is generally translated into English as ‘emptiness,’ ‘nothingness,’ ‘devoid’ or ‘voidness’. *Śūnyatā* is renown as *suññata* in Pāli language, which refers to the same meaning as the Śanskrit term. *Śūnyatā* is related to many remarkable Buddhist words, such as ‘*sññagārā*’, ‘*suññatānupassanā*’, ‘*suññatāsamādhi*’, ‘*suññatācetovimutti*’, ‘*suññatā-vimokkha*’, ‘*suññatāvihāra*’, etc.. Etymologically, the word

¹ Mūlamadhyamakārikā (literally ‘*The Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*’) composed by the eminent Buddhist figure Ācārya Nāgārjuna. This text is considered as the key documents for Madhyamaka School. Nāgārjuna lived at the end of the first century C.E. and his monumental text Mūlamadhyamakārikā (MMK) was composed around that time obviously. The entire MMK is consisted of twenty-seven chapters, which covers principle terms of Buddhism, such as, cause and condition, self-nature (*svabhāva*), action (*karma*), self, liberation (*nirvāṇa*), aggregates, etc.. Scholarly, it says that MMK is the foundation of Madhyamaka School along with the root of the Mahāyāna tradition.

‘*śūnyatā*’ derives from the adjective *śūnya* (Śanskrit grammar), *suñña* (Pāli grammar), *śūna* (Vedic grammar)². The Śanskrit word ‘*śūnya*’ emerges from the root (√) ‘*śvi*’ meaning ‘to swell’. Literally, *śūnya* means ‘relating to the swollen’ while the root (√) ‘*śvi*’ seems to have expressed the idea that something looks ‘swollen’ from the outside but is ‘hollow’ inside³. On the other hand, Sir Monier Williams defines the term ‘*śūnyatā*’ in his dictionary ‘*A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*’ as ‘loneliness’, ‘desolateness’, ‘absence of mind’, ‘non-reality’, ‘emptiness’, ‘illusory nature’ or nothingness⁴. Additionally, Indian subcontinent languages like Hindi, Nepali and Bengali refer the word ‘*śūnyatā*’ as zero (similar meaning to the mathematical term ‘0’). It has to be noted that the Śanskrit term of ‘*śūnya*’ is subsequently impacted many Asian languages enriching their mathematical-language. For example, Thai people pronounce it as ‘*śūny*’ (in terms of Thai Phonetic), Bengali people pronounce it as ‘*śūn*’ya’ (in terms of Bengali Phonetic), which sound similar to the English term ‘zero’. Buddhist scholars, however, commonly translated the term ‘*śūnyatā*’ as emptiness due to its linguistic benefit for clarifying the essence of its subtle, profound, metaphysical and metaphoric meaning as well as its ontological explanation.

NOTION OF EMTINESS IN EARLY BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

The notion of ‘Emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) appeared in early Buddhist teachings. Evidence from the Pāli Canonical texts explicitly proved that the Buddha himself used the term ‘emptiness’ many times for expounding his subtle and profound teachings towards his disciples. Referring to the Maha-suññata Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya, the Buddha clearly explained the notion of ‘emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) when Venerable Ānanda asked his master (the Blessed One) in what respect is the world so-called empty. Having heard Ānanda’s question carefully, the Buddha replied, “*suññam idaṃ atteva vā attaniyena vā*”, which means “insofar as it (the world) is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self, thus it is said, Ānanda, that the world is empty”⁵. The Blessed One admired those practitioners (*yogi*) who

² Phramaha Thongyod Bhipalo, **The Study of Suññatā in Theravāda Buddhism**, (Bihar: Wat Thai Buddagaya Bodh-Gaya, India, 2008), p. 39.

³ Edward Conze, **Buddhism: Its Essence and Development**, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1999), p. 130.

⁴ Monier Williams, **A Sanskrit-English Dictionary**; web <<http://monierwilliams.com/>> 11 September, 2016.

⁵ MI 122.

obtained the stage of emptiness. Hence, on one occasion the Buddha addressed Venerable Ānanda that the wise one is one who contemplates, enters, and remains in an emptiness that is undeniably pure (*parisuddham*) and paramount (*paramānuttaram*)⁶.

In addition to the early Buddhist literatures, the notion of ‘emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) is focused from three perspectives, namely, treating it (*śūnyatā*) as a meditative dwelling, as an attribute of objects, and as a type of heedfulness-release. These three types of explication are considered the foundations of the ‘emptiness’ concept in terms of Canonical (*Nikāya*) texts.

First, according to the sermon ‘The Lesser Discourse of Emptiness’ (*Cūḷa-suññata Sutta*) a clear statement could be found from the Buddha’s word on emptiness when Venerable Ānanda wanted to confirm of his earlier hearing whether the Blessed One’s joyous meditative dwelling of nothingness (*suññatāvihārena*) was correct or not. Having heard this question, the Buddha precisely illustrated to his attendant Venerable Ānanda that whatsoever he (Ānanda) heard, it was totally correct (*sussutam sugghātam*) and he (the Blessed One) remains fully in a dwelling of emptiness as before (*Pubbepāham ānanda, etarahi pi suññatāvihārena bahulam viharāmi*)⁷. This statement makes a clear notion that the Buddha used the term of ‘emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) for ascribing a peaceful and joyous meditating dwelling stage.

Second, with reference to the discourse ‘Conducive to the Imperturbable’ (*Āneñjasappāya sutta*) one can observe how the Blessed One used the notion of emptiness for his disciples as a type of attribute of objects and as a type of heedfulness-release. In this discourse, the Buddha advocated to the monks for going to the forest (*araññagato*), going to the root of a tree (*rukka-mūlagato*) going to an empty place (*suññagāra-gato*), sitting cross-legged, holding the body straight, setting mindfulness in front of him, and mindfully breathing out⁸. The aforesaid statement explicitly implies the Buddha’s observation of the term of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) that can be used as an object of mindful meditation in order to keep the mind lucid, imperturbable, peaceful and on edge from mental-proliferation and defilements.

Third, the discourse ‘The Greater Set of Questions-and-Answers’ (*Mahāvedalla Sutta*) delineates the term of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) as a type of heedfulness-release. This sermon describes that when a meditative person has gone to the wilderness, to the root of the tree

⁶MI 121.

⁷MI 121.

⁸MI 118.

or into an empty dwelling place, he should be aware of the mind and consider thus: ‘This is empty of self or of anything pertaining to self’ (*suññamidaṃ attena vā attaniyena vāti*)⁹. Venerable Sāiputta called this aforesaid noble consideration as emptiness heedfulness-release (*Ayaṃ vuccatāvuso suññatā cetovimutti*)¹⁰.

Based on above descriptions, one can observe an explicit notion of emptiness in the early Buddhist teachings where the Buddha and his disciples delineated an optimistic approach and skillfully used the term of emptiness for ascribing a meditative stage, as an object of mindfulness, and as a type of heedfulness-release.

THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS IN THE MADHYAMAKA SCHOOL

The Madhyamaka as a systematic philosophical tenet among the four great Buddhist schools¹¹, arose in the second century C.E. with the figure of the great saint Ācārya Nāgārjuna¹². Despite Madhyamaka School¹³ having a continuous history of development, it was originally established as a means of subtle doctrinal exposition of emptiness (skt. *śūnyatā*) that was marvelously presented by Ācārya Nāgārjuna.

⁹MI 143

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹ After the Buddha’s demise (*Mahāparinibbāna*), it is scholarly believed that Buddhism was spitted into eighteen sects, which are compiled into four main schools regarding the popular Buddhist doctrinal dispute: how the mind comes into existence. The four developmental Buddhist schools are namely, Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, Vijñānavāda and Madhyamaka or Śūnyatāvāda. In brief, the four great school’s philosophical viewpoints are as follows:

- (a) *Bāhyartha pratyakṣhavāda* by Sarvāstivādin or Vaibhāsikan, that means, the external object can be perceived through direct perception.
- (b) *Bāhyartha anumeyavāda* by Sautrāntikan, that means, external object is inference.
- (c) *Bāhyartha śūnyavāda* by Vijñānavādins, that means, external object is empty.
- (d) *Ubhayārtha śūnyavāda* by Mādhyamikans, that means, both external and internal are empty.

¹² Peter Della Santina, *Madhyamaka Schools in India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1995), p. 1.

¹³ Madhyamaka School was flourished in India from the 2nd Century to 11th Century. It is possible to distinguish four main stages in the development of the Madhyamaka School. The first stage of systematic formulation by Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva. In the second stage, Madhyamaka is divided into two schools – the Prāsangika represented by Buddhapālita and Svāntarika by Bhāvaviveka. The third stage includes Candrakīrti and Śāntideva who bring Madhyamaka to its rigorous, orthodox form and also follow the Prāsangika. The last stage is a syncretism of the Yogācāra and the Madhyamaka represented by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla..

The notion of emptiness, however, greatly played an important role in the sense of developing the Madhyamaka School. Emptiness doctrine was developed by Nāgārjuna during his lifespan. Initially, Nāgārjuna's main purpose was to prompt the emptiness doctrine for establishing the Madhyamaka School through negating Ābhidharmika interpretation¹⁴, i.e., *dharma*-theory¹⁵. Subsequently, Nāgārjuna started to preach emptiness doctrine in removing traditional dogmatic belief with using its skillful method (*upāya kauśalya*) by means of establishing the Buddha's secret teachings. For instance, Nāgārjuna states *śūnyata* as the remover of all types of view (Pāli: *diṭṭhi*, *skt. drṣṭi*)¹⁶. Hence, Venerable Nāgārjuna says, “*Sarvadṛṣṭi prahāṇā Śūnyatām tām pracatsmahe*”, which means “*śūnyatā* is thought to eliminate all views”¹⁷.

¹⁴ During the time of Nāgārjuna, there were several influential Ābhidharmika Schools, such as Sarvāsivādins, Vaibhāsikas, Vibhajyavāda, and Vātsīputriya. Sarvāsivāda was the most influential Ābhidharmika School that was opposed to Vibhajyavādins, and claimed that ‘*sarvaṃ asti*’, which means all *dharma*s exist for the three periods of time. In this manner, the past *dharma* existed, the future *dharma* will come into existence and the present *dharma* has already existed. In addition, all *dharma*s are dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpāda*) from an assemblage of condition. According to Sarvāsivādins, the *dharma* assert itself within the three periods of time – past, present and future, and forwarded the theory of self-nature (*svabhāva*), whereas Sautrāntika School introduced the conception of self (*ātman*) or person (*pudgala*). By contrast, with reference to the Ābhidharmika text *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya*, Vasubandhu asserts the term *dharma* sustains within its own characteristic, whether *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣaśāstra* refers to the *dharma* having its own self characteristic cannot be predicted apart from the *dharma* itself. On the contrary of all Ābhidharmika Schools, Nāgārjuna precisely gave the doctrine of emptiness or empty of self –nature or empty of existing *dharma*s, by which he recounts the non-self (*anātman*) doctrine of the Buddha. Eminent Nāgārjuna invented the restatement of no-self doctrine and dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) of the Buddha to answer the *dharma*-theory of Ābhidharmikas.

¹⁵ Kapila Abhayawansa, “The Truth of Suffering and the Truth of Cessation of Suffering: Their Identification in the Buddhist Scholasticism” *Ñāṇappabhā : A Felicitation volume in Honour of Venerable Gnanarama Māha Thera* (Singapore: Ti Sarana Buddhist association, 2011), p. 36.

¹⁶ The Buddha classified sixty-two kinds of wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) ‘The All-embracing Net of Views’ (*Brahmajāla Sutta*) as thus: (i) four kinds of beliefs in eternity (*sassata diṭṭhi*), (ii) four kinds of dualistic beliefs in eternity and non-eternity (*ekacca sassata diṭṭhi*), (iii) four views of the world being finite or infinite (*antānanta diṭṭhi*), (iv) four kinds of ambiguous evasion (*amarāvikkhepavāda*), (v) two doctrines of non-causality (*adhičcasamuppannavāda*), (vi) sixteen kinds of belief in the doctrine of percipient immorality (*saññītvāda*), (vii) eight kinds of belief in the doctrine of non-percipient immorality (*asaññītvāda*), (viii) eight kinds of belief in the doctrines of neither percipient nor non-percipient immorality (*n’evasaññī-nāsaññītvāda*), (ix) seven kinds of belief in annihilation (*ucchedavāda*) and (x) five kinds of belief in the doctrines of Nibbāna here and now (*diṭṭhadhammanibbānavāda*).

¹⁷ David J. Kalupahana, **Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way**, (Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1999), pp. 92-93.

Moreover, Nāgārjuna introduced Madhyamaka as the doctrine of the ‘Middle-Way’ (*madhyamā-pratipad*). Literally, Madhyamaka means, ‘one who holds to the middle’¹⁸. Nāgārjuna in his remarkable text *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* clearly states that the doctrine of *Śūnyatā* itself depends upon and follows the middle way. Therefore, Nāgārjuna says, “*Yah pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe, sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā*”, which means “whatever is dependent arising that is emptiness, that is dependent upon convention, and that itself is the middle way”¹⁹. This stanza clearly reveals that the four key terms *śūnyatā* (emptiness), *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), *upādāya-prajñapti* (designation or derived name) and *madhyamā-pratipad* (Middle Path) are expressly declared as synonyms. Among the four key terms, the concept of emptiness is the foremost root term which is dealing with the three remaining terms in ascribing the philosophy of the middle way (Madhyamaka School) as a whole.

EMPTYNESS CONCEPT IN YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL

The Yogācāra School²⁰ is one of the most influential Buddhist schools which probably evolved from a group of ancient Buddhist-monks in late second century C.E.²¹ Yogācāra School²² (the Mind Only School) was systematically founded by Asaṅga and his

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Āryasatya Parīkṣā; MMK.: 24.18.

²⁰ The Yogācāra School, whose name is taken from one of its foundational texts – the Yogācārabhūmi (Stages of Yoga Practice).

²¹ Edward Conze, **Buddhist Thought in India**, (Delhi: Motilal Publication, 1962), p. 250.

²² Yogācāra indicates originally a particular interest in the data of meditation experience (yoga) or perhaps Vijñānavāda (school affirming consciousness), Vijñaptimātra or Cittamātra (school affirming Mind Only). Therefore, this is widely called the school of Mind-only.

half-brother Vasubandhu²³ in the fourth Century C.E.²⁴.

In the Yogācāra School, one of the foremost doctrinal-teaching is ‘the three natures’ (skt. *trisvabhāva*). Vasubandhu describes the three natures in the first stanza of his monumental text *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* (TSN) as thus: “the imagined (*parikalpita-svabhāva*), the other-dependent (*paratantra-svabhāva*), and the absolutely accomplished (*pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*)”²⁵. Among the abovementioned three natures, the other-dependent nature or the consummated (*parikalpita-svabhāva*) has a close connection with the concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*).

In addition to Vasubandhu’s commentary *Madhyāntavibhāgakārikābhāṣya*, it is suggested on “there exists the imagination nature (*parikalpita-svabhāva*) of the unreal (*abhūta-parikalpa*), namely the discrimination (*vikalpa*) between the graspable or object (*grāhya*) and the grasper or subject (*grāhaka*). However, there is no pair (*dvaya*), such as the graspable and the grasper. There is instead emptiness (*śūnyatā*), which means that state of imagination of the unreal, which is lacking in the form of being graspable or grasper. Even in such emptiness there exists the imagination of the unreal. Thus, when something is absent in a container, the latter is then perceived as such; also, what is left over there, namely the container, is then recognized as such, namely, as undeniably existing there: this indeed is the

²³ saṅga and Vasubandhu were born in Northwest India in what is now Pakistan. Both of them had played a central role in its formulation and popularization. Asaṅga and Vasubandhu contributed to a large number of works defining, categorizing and setting forth the Mind-only philosophy. Asaṅga is famous for his *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Stages of the Bodhisattva Path), *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (Compendium of the Abhidharma) – a work specifically establishing Yogācāra Abhidharma, and the *Yogācārabhūmi* sometimes is also attributed to Asaṅga. He himself wrote commentaries on a number of important texts of Yogācāra Mahāyāna attributed to the Buddha Maitreya. Those which are attributed to him include *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (Ornament for the Realisations), *Madhyāntavibhāga* (the Discrimination of the Middle from the Extremes), *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* (the Discrimination of dharmas and their True Nature), *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras) and *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Vasubandhu is renowned for his *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* (A Treatise on the Three Natures), *Triṃśatikā* (A Treatise in Thirty Satnzas) and *Viṃśatikā* (A Treatise in Twenty Satnzas) and other texts containing commentaries on some of the above works of Maitreya such as *Madhyāntavibhāgakārikābhāṣya*. (Paul Williams, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*, pp. 155-6)

²⁴ John P. Keenan, **Yogācāra in Takeuchi Yoshinori, Buddhist Spirituality: Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, and Early Chinese**, (New Delhi: Shri Jainendra Press, 1995), p. 203.

²⁵ Thomas A. Kochumuttom (trans.), *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* (TSN) in *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience: A New Translation and Interpretation of the Works of Vasubandhu the Yogācārin*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1999), p. 92.

defining characteristic of emptiness”²⁶. Herein, Vasubandhu argues a thing in its absolute state of existence is devoid (*śūnya*) of subject-object duality, at the same time interprets emptiness (*śūnyatā*) with reference to the unreal (*abhūta-parikalpa*) ‘which is lacking in the form of being graspable or grasper’²⁷. The concept of emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) thereby ultimately means the state of existence that is empty of the imagination of unreal and of the consequent subject-object distinction²⁸.

Moreover, with reference to the unreal nature (*abhūta-parikalpa* or *paratantra-svabhāva*) the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is expressed as ‘neither (total) assertion (because of existing the negation of the pair of subject and object) nor (total) negation’ (because of having the assertion of the negation of that pair); ‘neither different (from the *abhūta-parikalpa*) nor identical (with *abhūta-parikalpa*)’, which are noted in the text *Madhyānta-vibhāga-kārika-bhāṣya*²⁹. Emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) then stands to unreal nature (*abhūta-parikalpa*), just as nature (*dharmatā*) stands to its substances (*anityatā* or *anityadharma*). They are not quite different (*na-prthak*) nor identical (*na-eka*), but just two different modes of existence of the same individual. Emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) refers to one’s mode of existence in the state of freedom (*nirvāṇa*), while unreal nature (*abhūta-parikalpa*) refers to one’s mode of existence in the state of *Śamsāra* (the cycle of suffering)³⁰. This is the true sense of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) in the Yogācāra system.

To sum up the abovementioned description of the early Yogācāra system, the three natures (*trisvabhāva*) are shown in the below chart:

²⁶ Thomas A. Kochumuttom (trans.), **A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience: A New Translation and Interpretation of the Works of Vasubandhu the Yogācārin**, p.31.

²⁷ MVK I.2 and MVKB I.2

²⁸ Thomas A. Kochumuttom (tr.), **Madhyānta-vibhāga-kārika-bhāṣya in A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience: A New Translation and Interpretation of the Works of Vasubandhu the Yogācārin**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1999), pp.30-56.

²⁹ MVK I.14

³⁰ *Ibid.*

The three natures (<i>trisvabhāva</i>)	Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya (Mvb 1.1)	Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya (Mvb 1.5)
The imagined nature (<i>parikalpita-svabhāva</i>)	Subject-objects interaction	Duality
The dependent nature (<i>paratantra-svabhāva</i>)	Imagination	Imagination
The other dependent nature or consummated nature (<i>parikalpita- svabhāva</i>)	Absence of duality	Emptiness (<i>śūnyatā</i>)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEPENDENT ORIGATION AND EMPTINESS

The doctrine Dependent Origination (Pali: *paṭiccasamuppāda*; Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*)³¹ is the most profound yet subtle teaching of the Buddha. It explicitly ascribes the law of nature and the root of suffering and uplifts Buddhism as a very unique and dynamic teaching compared to other religions and philosophies. Venerable Nāgārjuna was the first saint who precisely clarified a relationship between the concept of Dependent Origination and emptiness (*śūnyatā*).

Regarding the great text Mūlamadhyamakārikā, Nāgārjuna says, the middle way philosophy or Madhyamaka is not nihilism, but a clarification of Dependent Origination, and precisely claims that this doctrine is emptiness. He says, “*Pratītya yad yad bhavati*,

³¹ Dependent origination describes the reliance of all phenomena upon cause (*hetu*) and condition (*pratyaya*). Therefore, with reference to the early *Nikāya* text *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Assaji Thera told Upatissa (subsequently he became well known as Sariputta Thera) thus: “*Imasmim sati idaṃ hoti, imassa upādā idaṃ uppajjati, Imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati*”, which means “when this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases”. [Bahudhātuka Sutta, M.115] In the same way, Nāgārjuna wrote in the causality verses of the Mūlamadhyamakārikā as follows, “*na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ, utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacaba kecana*”, which means “nothing whatever arises; not from itself, not from another, not from both itself and another, and not without a cause”. [Pratyaya Parīkṣā; MMK.: 1.1.]

tat tac Śūnyatā svabhāvataḥ”, which means “whatever is subject to conditionality (dependent origination), is by its very nature tranquil and empty”³².

Nāgārjuna’s analogy of the twelve constituents of Dependent Origination into three categories- affliction (*kleśa*), action (*karma*) and suffering (*duḥkha*), in demonstrating with cause (*hetu*) and effect (*paccaya*) is explained as follows:³³

1. Ignorance	→ Affliction (<i>kleśa</i>)	→ Cause (<i>hetu</i>)
1. Volition	→ Action (<i>Karma</i>)	→ Cause
2. Consciousness	→ Suffering (<i>Duḥkha</i>)	→ Effect (<i>Paccaya</i>)
3. Name and Form	→ Suffering	→ Effect
4. Six Sense Doors	→ Suffering	→ Effect
5. Contact	→ Suffering	→ Effect
6. Sensation	→ Suffering	→ Effect
7. Craving	→ Affliction	→ Cause
8. Clinging	→ Affliction	→ Cause
9. Becoming	→ Action	→ Cause
10. Birth	→ Suffering	→ Effect
11. Old Age and Death	→ Suffering	→ Effect

According to the abovementioned chart,

- (i) The first category of affliction (*kleśa*) includes three constituents: (1) ignorance (*avidyā*), (8) craving (*trsnā*) and (9) clinging (*upādāna*).
- (ii) The second category of action (*karma*) includes two constituents: (2) volition or mental formation (*saṃskāra*) and (10) becoming (*bhāva*).
- (iii) The third category of suffering (*duḥkha*) includes the remaining seven constituents.

³² Svabhāva Parīkṣā, MMK 15.9

³³ Dvādasāṅga Parīkṣā, MMK 26.1-26.12.

These constituents, moreover, could be classified into two groups: causal (*hetu*) and resultant (*Paccaya*). In the commentarial text *Pratītyasamutpāda-hṛdaya-kārikā*, Nāgārjuna describes these twelvefold constituent as empty (*śūnya*); his analogy of emptiness for twelvefold formula of Dependent Origination with regards to the aforesaid chart (of twelve links) is as follows:

- (i) From the three, two originates; from the two, seven originate; and from these seven, in turn, the three originate. Thus the wheel of existence revolves again and again.
- (ii) The whole world is cause and effect; excluding this, there is no sentient being. From the factors (which are) only empty, empty factors originate³⁴.

The aforesaid examination on the relationship between the law of Dependent Origination and the doctrine of emptiness clearly reveals a note that those (the wise) who understands the law of Dependent Origination has seen the meaning of conditioned origination that is empty (*śūnya*).

Hence, Nāgārjuna advocates in the dedicatory verse of the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*:

*“Anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam ,
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam;
yaḥ pratītyasamutpādam prapañcōpaśamaṁ śivam ,
deśayāmāsa sambuddhas taṁ vande vadatāṁ varam ”*³⁵

The verse means, ‘there is non-extinction (*anirodham*), non-origination (*anutpādam*), non-destruction (*anucchedam*), non-permanence (*aśāśvatam*), non-identity (*anekārtham*), non-differentiation (*anānārtham*), non-coming into being (*anāgamam*) and non-going out of being (*anirgamam*); withdrawal of all mental-fabrication (*prapañcōpaśamaṁ*) of dependent origination. I (Nāgārjuna) offer my humble obeisance to the Buddha as the teacher of Dependent Origination (*Pratītyasamutpāda*)’.

³⁴ Peter Della Santina, *Causality and Emptiness: The Wisdom of Nāgārjuna* (Singapore: Buddhist Research Society, Singapore, 2002) pp.60-61.

³⁵ Dedicatory Verse, MMK.

Based on the above discussion, it implies that the connection between the doctrine of Dependent Origination and emptiness could be revealed by those who see the ultimate truth³⁶ and obtains the stage of freedom (*nirvāṇa*).

CONCLUSION

This study is an investigation into an analytical concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) doctrine from the Early Buddhist to the Buddhist developmental schools, mainly focused on Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Schools and examines that the teaching of Dependent Origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) has links to the concept of emptiness. Eminent Nāgārjuna did not accept any kind of dogmatic concepts, but clearly explained the Dhamma in logical ways and demonstrated to the people not to grasp in attachment as the Buddha advices. The *śūnyatā* (emptiness) doctrine of Nāgārjuna is the teaching of the Buddha as a par excellence.

As examined above, the early Buddhist teaching describes the notion of ‘emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) from three perspectives, namely, treating it (*śūnyatā*) as a meditative dwelling, as an attribute of objects, and as a type of heedfulness-release, whereas Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Schools used the concept of emptiness as a skillful means for understanding doctrinal expositions, such as the dependent nature (*parikalpita-svabhāva*) among the three natures’ (*trisvabhāva*), the middle way (*madhyamā-pratipad*), using it as a remover of all wrong views (*dṛṣṭi*).

Based on above considerations, one can conclude that the doctrine of emptiness is like a lamp which could be used as an object to understand the central Buddhist teaching of Dependent Origination along with describing the Buddha’s doctrinal diversity.

³⁶Nāgārjuna logically concludes his *śūnyatā* (emptiness) doctrine that things are based on two truths similar to the Buddha’s interpretation. The Blessed One’s teaching rests on two truths, namely, conventional truth (*samvṛti satya*), and truth in the highest sense (*paramārtha satya*). One who does not comprehend the distinction between these two truths does not comprehend the profound meaning of the Buddha’s teaching.

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INDIVIDUALISM AND THE KĀLĀMAS: CRITIQUE OF AMERICAN BUDDHISM



Seth Evans

ABSTRACT

The aim of this short article is to examine American Buddhism and the emphasis it seems to put on the Kālāma Sutta, as well as exploring possible misinterpretations some hold in regards to this Sutta. The individualism of American Buddhists is also explored along with some Americans' insistence that the Kalama Sutta supports this social identity and how that identity may fit in with the tradition of the religion. This article suggests that the modern individualistic nature of the American culture is not supported by the Kālāma Sutta and that this particular sense of identity is not found in traditional Buddhism.

Keywords: Individualism, American Buddhism, Kālāma Sutta

INDIVIDUALISM WITHIN AMERICAN BUDDHISM

Much of American Buddhism holds virtues of individualism and reason that seem to make it fit better with modern western society than more traditional interpretations of the religion. This sense of individuality is validated in part by the Kālāma Sutta, which is a teaching the Buddha gave to a group of people looking for someone who held the “truth”. The Buddha replied that they must know for themselves, and this has been interpreted as direct lesson for individualism by many Americans.

From American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship:

For denizens of the cybersangha, anti-authoritarian sentiments are expressed through out the frequent invocation of a minor Buddhist scripture, the Kālāma Sutta, in which the Buddha warns his hearers not to be persuaded by hearsay, expertise, or respect for teachers, but rather to rely and act upon their own experience of what is healthy, admirable, and beneficial. This teaching, above all others, has become a kind of manifesto for American Buddhism.¹

Many have even gone so far as to say the Kālāma Sutta teaches one to reject absolute value, something one might expect to find in most religions.

According to Richard Gombrich:

The Kālāma Sutta enjoin each man to seek the truth for himself, but here too the reference is to religious truth conducive to salvation, not to truth as an absolute value, and the passage is remarkable rather as a charter for tolerance and individualism.²

There are those who have taken this Sutta to be evidence that Buddhism is a rational religion regardless of it being more than 2 millennia old.

¹Christopher Queen, **American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship**, p. xxix.

²Richard Gombrich, *Buddhist Precept & Practice* p. 307.

Soma Thera (1981) states that:

‘The Buddha’s Charter of Free Enquiry’. As such, it gives Buddhism the status of being at least 2,000 years ahead of the European Enlightenment and holds out the promise of a humanistic and rational religion.³

The American Buddhist reliance on this Sutta seems to point to the need for America to have some kind of individualistic and rational choice when deciding on a spiritual path within everyday life. However, the choice may be hasty, as some interpretations of this Sutta seem to be biased towards a modern perspective and may not be understood correctly.

KĀLĀMA SUTTA

The passage in question from the Kālāma Sutta is as follows:

Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence [of a speaker], or because you think: ‘The ascetic is our guru.’ But when, Kālāmas, you know for yourselves: ‘These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to harm and suffering/ then you should abandon them.’⁴

The Buddha was not asking the Kālāmas to reason out their experience in some modern sense. The idea that this sutta is about discerning what is the truth based on empirical evidence seems to be misleading. The modern interpretation that many American Buddhists are talking from this sutta is that we should somehow construct reality on past experiences in some form of a method based on induction and prediction, much like the scientific method. However, the Buddha said not to trust “logical reasoning, inferential reasoning or by reasoned

³Stephen Evans, **Doubting the Kālāma-Sutta: Epistemology, Ethics, and the ‘Sacred’**, p. 91.

⁴Bhikkhu Bodhi (Tr.), **The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A translation of the Anguttara Nikaya**, p. 280.

cognition”.⁵ In fact, the Buddha is not discussing the truth of reality so much as the ethical nature of reality, what is good and bad.

Stephen Evans writes:

The subject matter of the Buddha’s answer to the Kālāmas is at least as much ethical as it is epistemological. The Buddha is talking not about doctrines and their truth or falsity, but about attitudes and actions and whether they are good or bad.⁶

This then becomes a question of what is right and wrong, and this notion of right and wrong appears to have objective qualities, not just a subjective view of what an individual may consider right or wrong. The Buddha goes on to give a lesson of morality towards the end of the sutta:

a mind imbued with loving-kindness... with a mind imbued with compassion;
.with a mind imbued with altruistic joy...with a mind imbued with equanimity

The Buddha appears to be imploring the Kālāmas to believe objective values of right and wrong for themselves, yet warns against using reason and inference. This implies a sense of culture and tradition with an accepted ethical model that the Buddha is referring to.

Stephen Evans adds:

Their choices, moreover, are to be made not only in a spirit of free inquiry, but also in terms of public opinion, authority and tradition, with faith as a component.⁷

If the Buddha is not asking the Kālāmas to reasonably believe in this model from reasoning experience, what is the Buddha asking of the Kālāmas? It appears as if the Buddha is asking the Kālāmas to believe in some objective model of what is right and wrong from faith. This would account for why the Buddha says you must “believe for yourselves. ...”⁸ This decision must be made by each individual and can’t be forced; it has to be a choice made

⁵*Ibid.* p. 280.

⁶*Op. cit.* Stephen Evans, p. 105.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Op.cit.* Bhikkhu Bodhi, p. 280.

with a belief in a tradition that holds certain rights and wrongs that one holds for themselves with out someone keeping it for them. It appears to be a decision, not made in a modern individualistic sense, as some American interpretations would imply, but from individual faith in a tradition of belief.

PROBLEMS OF INDIVIDUALISM

American Buddhism is no doubt a modern interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. The Dhamma is seen as something more practical than traditional, and more self centered than cultural.

Richard Hughes explains:

The debate over the quality of American Buddhism in the long term is important, but in the absence of rigorous universally held standards, is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, not having taken up the devotionism and ritualism of Asia laity, most Buddhists in these communities will no doubt continue to meditate as a form of lay practice, whether at a Zen center, on a Vipassana retreat, or on a more explicitly therapeutic model... Such a pluralistic approach to practice is in keeping with the overall tenor of American Buddhism, where the accent is on flexibility, pragmatism, individualism, and diversity.⁹

What does this modern interpretation of the Dhamma mean for Buddhism? It does not appear that the Buddha was open to such fluidness within his teachings. The Buddha warned against too much individual interpretation and not enough reliance on the original teachings.

From the Bala Vagga, Duka Nipata, Anguttara Nikaya:

Bhikkhus, there are these two kinds of fools. What two? One who perceives what is non-Dhamma as Dhamma and one who perceives what is Dhamma as non-Dhamma. These are the two kinds of fools

⁹Richard Hughes Seager, **Buddhism in America**, p. 5.

Bhikkhus, there are these two kinds of wise people. What two? One who perceives what is non-Dhamma as non-Dhamma and one who perceives what is Dhamma as Dhamma., These are the two kinds of wise people.¹⁰

In fact, it appears that much of American Buddhism is not just a more individualistic interpretation of the teachings, but as outright alteration from traditional thought.

According to Martin J. Verhoeven:

The early missionaries of Buddhism to America purposely stripped Buddhism of any elements that might appear superstitious, mythological, even mystical. Dharmapala, Suzuki, and Vivekananda clearly ascertained that Americans measured truth in science, and science posed little theological threat to a Buddhist and Hindu worldview. After all, Buddhism had unique advantages for someone who rejected their faith (Christian) due to its authoritarianism and unscientific outlook.¹¹

The Buddha specifically warned his disciples about changing the Dhamma to seem more appealing.

Saddhammapatirupaka Sutta

there is no disappearance of the true doctrine, Kassapa, till a counterfeit doctrine arises in the world.¹²

Much of American Buddhism seems tailored to individual needs and wants. To fit a modern lifestyle, it may be a spiritual training wheel created to support happiness within this modern structure.

John Daido Looi, a highly regarded Roshi, noted that:

“Most of the lay practice that goes on among new converts in America is a slightly watered-down version of monastic practice, and most of the monastic practice is a slithy glorified version of lay practice... To me, the hybrid path-halfway

¹⁰ *Op. cit.* Bhikkhu Bodhi, p. 175.

¹¹ Martin J. Verhoeven, **Buddhism and Science: Probing the Boundaries of Faith and Reason**, pp. 77-97.

¹² Rhys Davids, **Kindred Sayings (Samuttara Nikaya)**, p. 152.

between monasticism and lay practice- reflect out cultural spirit of greediness and consumerism. with all the possibilities, why give up anything” “we want it all.” why not do it all”.¹³

The Buddha emphasized keeping the Dhamma, and not being sidetracked by more attractive teachings. As the Dhamma is difficult, our own interpretations may not be able to penetrate the importance and the truth of the teachings. Our deluded minds want something that seems more accessible, something that seems more practical, something that is more appealing. The Buddha foretold that this is exactly what would happen, and that it would mark the beginning of the decline of the Dhamma.

Ani Sutta:

Those suttantas uttered by the Tathāgata, deep, deep in meaning, not of the world, dealing with the void, to these when uttered, they will not listen, they will not lend a ready ear, they will not bring to them an understanding hear, they will not deem those doctrines that which should be learnt by heart, that which should be mastered. But those suttantas which are made by poets, which are poetry, which are a manifold of words, a manifold of phrases, alien, the utterances of disciples, to these when uttered they will listen, they will lend a ready ear, they will bring an understanding heart, they will deem these doctrines that which should be learn by heart, which should be mastered. then it is, brethren, that the suttantas uttered by the Tathāgata, deep, deep in meaning, not of the world, dealing with the void, will disappear.¹⁴

Buddhism is a religion of deep teachings that has always had a tradition of elder and student. It depends on the Dhamma being passed down from generation to generation, from teacher to student and so on, as it has for two and a half millennia. If we start interpreting the teachings in any way that seems fit to our deluded and ignorant minds, we are surely distorting the teachings. The Dhamma was founded in a tradition of culture that required respect for the teacher and a ready thirst for knowledge to be passed down from those that came before, not just a perception of what one may think the Dhamma is supposed to mean.

¹³ Richard Hughes Seager, **Buddhism in America**, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 179.

The Buddha seemed to be very clear about this model of respect. He also stressed that the reason one knows this model is correct is through faith.

Canki Sutta:

Striving is most helpful for the final arrival at truth.

Scrutiny is most helpful for striving.

Application of the will is most helpful for scrutiny.

Desire is most helpful for application of the will.

Accepting the teachings as a result of pondering them is most helpful for desire. Examination of the meaning is most helpful for accepting the teachings. Memorizing the teachings is most helpful for examining the meaning. Hearing the Dhamma is most helpful for memorizing the teachings. Giving ear is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma. Paying respect is most helpful for giving ear. Visiting is most helpful for paying respect. Faith is most helpful for visiting, Bharadvaja.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

This article has explored some aspects of American Buddhism and what appears to be a need to define individualism as a virtue, especially in regards to the Kālāma Sutta. Whether or not American Buddhism, as it exists today, is a good thing for Buddhism is not so much in question as the need it seems to have to verify modern characteristics of society through ancient scripture. The Kālāma Sutta was not a discourse for modern rational thinking, it was not calling people to be more individualistic socially. Rather, it was a teaching on individual belief within the communal tradition of Buddhism. The belief in the Buddha's teachings must be made individually and with determination. This does not mean that the community or the tradition is not important, and it certainly does not mean the teachings are not an intricate part of that decision. It is saying that one should learn from the teacher, participate in the traditions, be a member within the community, and to do all of these things from a decision that one has made on their own; a decision that the Buddha's teachings are true.

¹⁵ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*, tr Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, page 480.

This new form of individualistic Buddhism is not necessarily bad for Buddhism in itself. However, the tendency for this type of Buddhism to validate its individualism through ancient doctrine is bad for the religion. Trying to make individualism a virtue is fine. Constructing a modern interpretation of Buddhism is fine. Conceptualizing the teachings from a perception of American values is fine. However, distorting the teachings and misinterpreting the doctrine in order to validate this form of Buddhism is not only harmful to the individuals, it is harmful to Buddhism as a whole. There is no need to imply the Buddha modeled his teachings around ideals he never held in order to construct a doctrine that agrees more with an individualistic identity. A modern development can be a good thing for Buddhism, but that is what it is, a development. Furthermore, understanding the teachings as they were meant by the Buddha, as best we can, may be necessary for this development, and not claiming that the modern western construct of the Dhamma is actually what the Buddha was teaching.

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WORKING AND COMPASION



Phramaha Boonsook Suddhiyano

ABSTRACT

The statement “working is life or life is works” is always said because mindfulness creates the work and the work creates mindfulness. The Thai monk, Buddhadasa bhikkhu, said “the working is dhamma practice¹”. There are many works in the world where we live. These involve good and bad choices. We can call these “the profession”. It is necessary to live by works, because we all have to spend life by activities or jobs which take us to happiness or richness. All activities that appear in the world come from human beings who created them by their wisdom that can be common or super mundane². We all actually face the important things which are included in the three characteristics as Buddha said in Dhammaniyamasutta. When we see them with mindfulness, we can relieve suffering. So mindfulness³ makes works perfect, but works make life perfect by compassion⁴ to others.

¹Phrs Dhammagosajarn (Buddhadasabhikkhu). **Man Handbook**. (Bangkok, 8th volume 2010), p. 45.

²*Ibid.*, p. 20.

³Phra Bhahmgunabhorn (P.A. Payutto). **Dictionary of Buddhism**. (Bangkok, 13th volume 2005), p. 82.

⁴*Ibid.* p. 97.

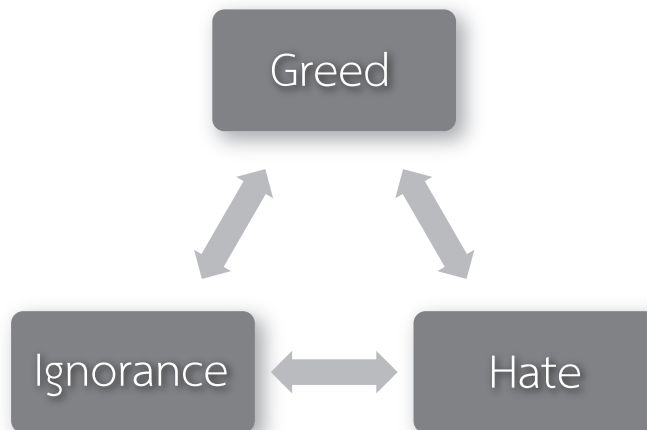
INTRODUCTION

We are the human beings who hope for freedom and happiness, but all of us cannot hope and do good all the time because we are not perfect. Humans create shamefulness and fear the results of sin for being selfishness. It is the narrow mind that is covered or taken over by the greed, hate and ignorance⁵ in every part of life.

Greed is thirsty to sensual and material desires. Greed blinds men's spirit and creates conflict among men who live and work on this earth.

Hate is an army that kills the goodness within human beings. It comes out in action, speech, and thought. It makes men cruel.

Ignorance is the darkness of wisdom or insight. It is the trap that pulls men back as well as the drug that men use without common sense. It makes men blind until they go the wrong directions. We call the three the "the bad circle"⁶. We can know its mechanism as follows:



This circle we can change by adding or developing mindfulness and compassion. These are the most perfect processes of the mind. They are the best tool to cut bad action off from human life. They are a stable rope or chain to pull us back to the good ways. It is

⁵Sudep Suvirangkul. **Sociology upon Buddhism**. (Bangkok, 1993), p. 104.

⁶Tonglor Wongdhamma. **Introduction Ethics**. (Bangkok, 1993), pp. 77-82.

liked cool water to distinguish the hate's hotness. Finally, compassion appears and makes all the principles of ethics in Buddhism.

THREEFOLD CHARACTERISTICS

The “threefold characteristics⁷” are a universal law. They comprise of the impermanence, dhammaniyama, and non-self that is the uncontrolled phenomena. Understanding impermanence in Buddhism can answer all questions about life. It is not stable and it has broken all time by the factors that might be suitable to break out. The dhammaniyama is the truth that blinds one with defilements such as hate and conflict. Non-self is the absence of a permanent self. When things are changed by the supporting causes, they are nothing or non-self.

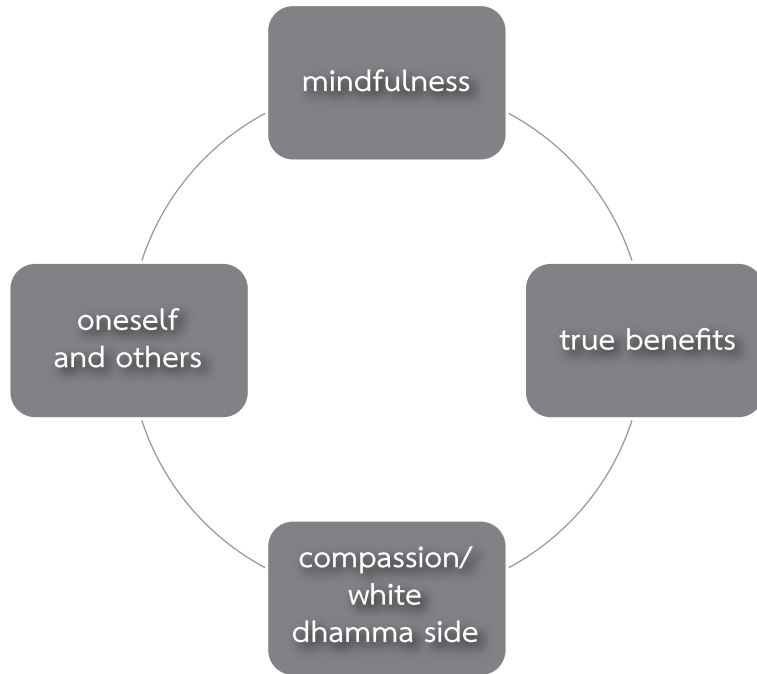
Men have really tried to overcome this law, but they cannot. One should try to accept it as the truth⁸ and realize it truly, so one can live happily and with the true benefits of life.

The true benefits are called “the good or white side” by the Buddha, but the bad actions are the dark side. The good is through the hope that they have to do the goodness that comprises of charity, precept or law and insight. It is well known that it is “threefold Punnakiriyavatthu⁹”. The punna is meant that it is the true benefits in the recent, because it helps the mind become clean. The cleaning's benefits are happiness and peace. It is the principle of Buddhism that men should practice with the pure intention. When we love charity, we are full of happiness because it will increase the beautiful environment to others. It becomes compassion automatically. We will beware of works by mindfulness that is the result of the true benefits or the white dhamma within our heart or spirit. This is the good circle as follows.

⁷*Op. cit.* Phra Bhahmgunabhorn, p. 71.

⁸Phrarajsangworyarn. (Buddhaniyo). **Dhaniyapuja**. (Nakornrajsima, 2009), p. 27.

⁹Department of Religions Affair. **The People's Monk (Somdej Phra Nyanasamvara Patriarch of Thailand)**, (Bangkok, 2015), p. 40.



The law or precept is the mechanism to increase happiness and peace in life. The best law comes from all people who share the same vision that displays real compassion to others. All human beings can use it for living together in the communities without dangers and conflict. The precept or law is the wall of peace. If somebody breaks out, they break the peace out. The universal precept is friendly for everyone. It is the big practice to live together for all nationalities and religions around the world. It will be the one standard which is almost perfect to live peacefully. The most important act is that men realize and walk along with the universal precept. There are five topics: the love, the right profession, the respect and sincere to the couple of lovers, the right speech and the mindfulness¹⁰. Humans of the should understand these five precepts and keep them as a practice in their life. They will create the true benefits¹¹ to oneself and others. This is the good circle:

¹⁰ Esther and Jerry Hicks. **The Law of Attraction (The basics of the Teaching of Abraham)**, (Hay House, Inc., 2006), p.. 63.

¹¹ *Op. cit.* Department of Religions Affair. p. 7.



Insight or wisdom is the center to control social law and self-discipline, because it is the central core to manage and develop everything that has appeared in this world through human activities. Humans can create the best wisdom through mindfulness, compassion, and virtues or punnakiriyavatthu.

Mindfulness has to be used in all professions. The best methods of mindfulness is recalling in body movement, in feeling, and in mind or psychological phenomena that accompanies body movement. This is the most important processes to wake up and stimulate the white dhamma to protect peace in the world. Buddha said “the mindfulness must be developed or wanted in everywhere and every time”.

Compassion is driven by the mindfulness. It has the quality to clean selfishness and develop the quality of life¹². The mind has the love which supports compassion helping the mind do good things for others.

Compassion is done through charity, acting only for the goodness. If people have stable compassion, they will select the right job without bad effects. They aim at the public policy and are aware of others benefits. They love the goodness and abstain from the sin. They

¹² *Op. cit.* Phrarajsangworyarn. (Buddhaniyo), pp. 34-38.

have endurance to solve problems by mindfulness and wisdom. They believe in the values of the men, because they act in daily life with belief in karma which makes them heedfulness in working with mindfulness and compassion without worry of the effects of karma. They are sure that truth and action come from the mind with mindfulness and compassion. They restraint in the virtues and act along with the goodness joyfully. Therefore, Buddha said in the Culakammavibhangasutta¹³ that “kammassaka manava satta kammadayada kammayoni kammabandhu kammapatissarana kammam satte vibhajati hinappanitaya”. This means that all creatures belong to their actions, take the results of their actions, were born by their actions, and are bonded by their actions.

Kammassaka means that actions belong to the actor. Therefore, the people with compassion and mindfulness will have the heedfulness¹⁴ to do everything in daily life without ignoring good action. This chain of kammassaka makes them realize and do everything carefully.

Kammadayada means that results come from actions; they will take both good and bad result, though nobody cannot force or change these results. Therefore, compassionate people will watch to follow and do with mindfulness in order to control their actions for good results.

Kammayoni means that actions are the primary source for birth or connection with the new or old actions that will become the first appearance and tell how the creatures are. However, they knew this kamma and accept this law and they won't fear until they are lack of the mindfulness, but they will try to find the good or new ways out of the problems. They know how to do or to live with the mindfulness and the compassion, because the kamma is like the chain connecting together on and on.

Kammabandhu means “the code of the creatures”, it is the DNA of life in all the creatures. Kammabandhu watches or follows giving results by bonding the action; one can not flee from these results, good or bad. If people want to overcome bad results, they will have to always do good deeds. The good ways or actions lead to the happy life.

¹³ Sudep Suvirangkul. **Sociology Upon Buddhism**. (Bangkok, 1993), pp. 110-114.

¹⁴ Ven. Songcol, **Opening the Eyes**, (Korea, 2004), p. 39.

Kammapatissarana follows a creature to help and take care of it. It is a type of process that bonds actions in the circle. It will touch on all aspects of life: home, food, pure air, etc. It will often take them to bad actions as the ship is sailing to an island which may be bad or good.

Kammam satte vibhajati yadidam hinappanitaya means that it is action that provides a creature with bad and good ways. This is the main point that people who have the mindfulness and compassion adhere to with wisdom. Social quality can be calm and peaceful because people have the quality of mindfulness and compassion, this is the way to hope and create the best choice in this world. Mindfulness and compassion drive the intention of men for insight through the types of kamma.

RESULTS OF KAMMA CAN BE WHOLESOME OR UNWHOLESOME

There are four types of appearances that tell the influence of kamma to the individual:

First, kamma, ditthadhammavedaniyakama are results of action that appear in this life.

Second, kamma, uppajjavedaniyakamma are results of action that appear in the next life.

Third, kamma, aparaparavedaniyakamma, are results of action that appear in an indeterminate time: either this life or future lives.

Fourth kamma, ahosikamma, are results of action that are defunct and have missed their opportunity, they will not appear.

RESULTS OF KAMMA ARE DETERMINED BY DUTY

First, kamma, janakakamma, is the primary cause that sends creatures to a new birth.

Second kamma, upatthamkakamma, supports all actions like nursemaid that takes care of a baby.

Third, kamma, upapilakakamma, is action that interferes with other actions. It obstructs another actions either through goodness or badness.

Fourth, kamma, upaghatakamma, is action that cuts or breaks other action. For example, a good action is giving a result to a creatures but a bad actions comes and cuts out the good result.

RESULTS OF KAMMA DEPEND ON STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS

Strong resulted kamma is garukamma. This is an action certhat has the strongest results.

Long collected kamma is acinnakamma, This is an action that adds to a result over a long period of time.

Death appearing kamma is asannakamma. This is an action that gives the result of death.

Non-intending kamma is katattakamma. This is an action that was done without intention.

CONCLUSION

All types of action are decided by mindfulness which selects the expression to others by the compassion¹⁵ which can lead to friendship¹⁶. Mindfulness or Heedfulness¹⁷ sets the compassionate actions that set the social values for offering peace to societies everywhere.

¹⁵ Phramaha Amnuay Amsukari. **Pictorial Biography of the Lord Buddha**. (Bangkok, 2014). p. 19.

¹⁶ Somdejmahaveerawong (Pim Dhammadharo), **Life Auspicious**, (Bangkok, 2000), pp. 37-52.

¹⁷ Sathienpong Wannapok. **The Buddha's Words in the Dhammapada**. (Bangkok, 2012), p. 228.

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THE HUMAN SOCIETY AND THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT ON MODERN DAY HUMAN RIGHTS



Ven. W. Piyaaratana

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes that Buddhism tried to implement human rights for all from the inception of Buddhism. All humans were treated in the same way. There was no difference between countries, people, religions, societies or tribes. These rights taught by the Buddha seem to be consistent with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The Buddha tried to liberate all the people no matter from which corner of the earth they come from and he instructed his disciple to walk and preach the doctrine for the well beings of many.¹

This paper will attempt to show that a world body concerning the human rights of all people in the world, such as the United Nations Declaration, adopts the teachings of the Buddha as the base for their human rights laws. Buddhism is not only a logical philosophy but also a fact that one can use in their daily life to lead a peaceful life which contributes to the society's human rights.

Keywords: Human Rights, United Nations, Buddhism, Justice

¹ S I 45.

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION

In 1948 the United Nations declaration on human rights was the first documented declaration on human rights which was accepted by all countries. The human rights vested on the people on this declaration cannot be changed or abused by any person, country or a government.

According to the Buddhist concept every human is born with the full human rights. The fate of a person lies on that same person.² One should have a good knowledge of the life and its rights to live. One should be able to analyze that persons own life to understand the rights of the others. Therefore the highest human rights are enjoyed by the *arahats*. Any person who expects the private freedom surely can get the necessary advise from the teachings of the Buddha no matter whether that person belongs to any religion, cast or creed.

Avoiding social obligations or dis-respecting the human rights is common in any society. For this very reason the people lose their human rights or to respect another person or respect the human rights, that person should lead an honest life. Most of the human rights in Buddhism have today become a law accepted by the International community. Therefore every government in the world is bound to respect the human rights.

On the 1st paragraph of the world declaration on human rights, it accepts the fact that every human born has the right for freedom.³ Every human must respect the other. It says that every human must live understanding each other and respecting each other. These declarations on human rights are not new to the teachings of the Buddha. The biggest obstacle for freedom is the inability of most to understand the reality due to lack of proper education.⁴ The Buddha emphasized the importance of a personality of a person and the understanding of the others human rights. This is the personality of a man. He emphasized⁵ the importance of free-will (*attakāra*), personal endeavour (*purisakāra*), personal energy, (*purisathāma*), the strength (*purisaviriya*), and the responsibilities of a person (*dhoragga*). Therefore a person's

²D III77 *Tasmātiḥānanda, attadīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā*.

³Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf, 2015), p. 4. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

⁴S V 1.

⁵D III 102-116.

birth is independent. That person can realize the liberation of life which is not easy. This means the human receives not only the human rights but the responsibility to execute them. This is why the humans become the most important animal in the universe.

The Buddha never wanted to get another human under him but always thought that everyone had equal rights. He preached that one must be their own light. This concept is visible in a very developed society. During the time of the Buddha this could never have been dreamt of. But the Buddha had the vision for such a society many centuries ago.

According to the declaration of the Human rights by the United Nations, Cast, creed, colour, sex, language, religions or whatever other reason will not hinder or violate the rights of the people and their independence.⁶ It also says that the political background of any country cannot disturb the human rights vested on them by treaty at the 1948 summit. These are the very same words Buddha mentioned many centuries before this summit.

BUDDHISM

According to Buddhism the differences of the people are due to their *kamma*⁷ of the education they receive, or their ability to carry out the work they have to do. Therefore according to the Vasalasutta, one does not become Brahmin or an outcaste by the birth but according to the action that he/she performs.⁸ Those who attained some spiritual attainments do not think that they are above the rest of the society. Instead they try to part with their knowledge and uplift the educational standards of the society. When it comes to liberation there are no male and females. It is against the Buddhist teachings to give less priority to women in the society. There are many situations where the women were far above the males in the society.⁹ Providing a preface to the book entitled on 'Woman under Primitive Buddhism', C.A.F. Rhys Davids has mentioned variously that according to the Buddhist thought without

⁶Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p. 6 Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

⁷M III. 202 *kammaṃ satte vibhajati*.

⁸Sn 136, Not by birth is one an outcast; not by birth is one a brāhmaṇa. By deed is one an outcast, by deed is one a brāhmaṇa. tr N.A. Jayawikrama, (Homagama: Karunaratne & Sons, 2001), p. 54.

⁹J III 438.

a doubt the women have equal strength in mind same as the men.¹⁰ Therefore the teachings of Buddhism do not accept that the freedom or human rights of men more than the women. Equal rights are vested on the female too.

For the sake of human rights the Buddhist teaching does not accept combining various reasons for the personal benefit of a person. Whatever the human rights are it must be enjoyed by all no matter what status that person lives. The foundation laid from the *Sigālovādasutta*¹¹ for the social connection between all people to solve the internal conflicts in the families and in the society is strong enough to understand the value of human rights taught in Buddhism. The human rights mentioned in this sutta are valid for all humans in any society.

According to Buddhist teachings, all humans falls into the same standards in the society no matter what social status they enjoy. Those who refuse to accept this does not falls in to the category of “humans”. The responsibilities of the parents and the responsibilities of the children towards the parents are clearly mentioned. For the children to understand and practice the responsibilities and the human rights of the others, the parents should set an example by following those. The Children will follow the steps of the parents. When such children become a part of the society, they will always respect the others in the society. This is clearly visible in developed countries. A proper education at a very young age teaching to respect the others are done in such developed countries.

RIGHT TO LIFE

According to the human rights declaration by the United Nations, Every person has the right to live, think independently and take care of their own security.¹² In the olden days a king was appointed who was vested with the power of the judiciary, the power to control the economy, and to be the leader of the society. The public should be donated one sixth of their earning to the king, to take care of the needs of the Royal Family. This practice was to

¹⁰ I.B. Horner, **Woman under Primitive Buddhism**, ed by Clement Egfraton, (London:George Routledge & Sons, LTD, 1930), Preface xiii-xviii.

¹¹ D III 180-193.

¹² Universal Declaration on Human Rights, *Op. cit*, 8. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

have their human rights and the king to give them the protection and the security. Therefore it was the prime responsibility of the king to take care of the people.¹³

There are five precepts in the Buddhist teachings for the people to lead a good life. The guarantee to live without fear and the security is mentioned in the first precept.¹⁴ No one can live with fear that someone will harm their lives. Such a protection must be guaranteed by the Government. Every living being likes to live happily. Every living being loves their life. The Buddha said take oneself as an example and practice nonviolence to all living beings.¹⁵ If everyone practice the kindness, caring, nonviolence no one can hate another. No one can commit a crime on another. A person who seeks liberation through the teachings of the Buddha cannot even harm the smallest insect. According to the modern social scientists, from the primary society to the developed society, human needs are the prime importance. To fulfill such needs of the people lessons should be learned from economic science, political science, social sciences.

According to the Buddhist teachings one must learn to work according to the conscious, think independently and protect the human rights of all. The Buddha was only a teacher.¹⁶ He did not force the rules and regulations on anyone. Instead he only showed the correct path to move on. To make the right decisions the teachings of Buddhism mention the way to use the brain of a person. By doing this, anyone can set aside the inefficiency and develop the mind to do the work more efficiently.

RIGHT NOT TO BE ENSLAVED

According to the declaration of human rights by the United Nations, no person can be used as a slave for any reason.¹⁷ In every way the slave trade became illegal. The slave trade flourished in the past because of the social poverty of the countries. According to the old teachings of the Brahmins they said that those who are with pleasant bodies and pleasant color are Arians and the others are non-Arians. The Non-Arians were treated as second

¹³ D I 13.

¹⁴ Abstain from killing any beings .

¹⁵ Dhp.130.

¹⁶ Dhp. 273.

¹⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p. 10 'No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms'

class citizens. Those people were used as slaves for the Arians. Not only they became slaves of the Arians but the Arians held the right to kill them any time they want without any reason. They did not even have the right to walk on the road or trample a shadow of an Arians.

Buddhism that rejects the Brahmin Cast system, all humans was treated the same way.

The first thing on the Buddhist economic teachings are the non-acceptance of the slave trade. No human could be a slave under any circumstances.¹⁸ If anyone earns through the slave trade, that person should be condemned by the whole society. In some societies there are only two categories the masters and the slaves. Depending on the wealth the masters can become slaves and slaves can become masters in such societies. Such societies are not accepted in the teachings of the Buddha.

In the early days, there was an opportunity to get ordination in Order to those who worked for the king and after they become ordination the King respected and treated them as he would treat any monk. This was evident when the Buddha had the conversation with King Ajāsatttha.¹⁹ Once a person became a monk the cast or creed of that person was forgotten.

RIGHT NOT TO BE SUBJECT TO CRUELTY

The Human rights declaration of the United Nations also emphasize the no human should be subject to cruelty, or in human punishment.²⁰ Most of the human rights violations are done by the leaders or people at the top level in governments. Therefore the king or the leader of the country should deviate from this practice and have to ensure that the human rights of all the people in the country are protected at the highest level no matter what religion, cast or creed they belong to. Although punishment for violating the rules is accepted in the Buddhist teaching, they do not accept physical punishment to anyone or to hard the life of any person.²¹ The punishment should not be too severe the hands or legs of a person but proper human punishment should be meted out for the violators of the law. If the rulers of the country rob the money and the wealth of the Government then they should not impose

¹⁸ A III 208.

¹⁹ D I 46-86.

²⁰ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit.*, p.12 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'.

²¹ Dhp. 129.

taxes on the people. The rulers should set the example for the people to follow. If one thinks that deporting the criminals or insulting them will bring them to proper road in life it is totally wrong. The criminals without a proper earning will continue to be criminals. The best way to reduce the crimes is by providing reasonable jobs for every person. For this agriculture and trading should be encouraged by the government. The government should not burden the masses with heavy taxes and they should not be enjoying all the benefits while the masses suffer. The governments should avoid wars and violence. Today some governments behave like terrorist organizations. The terror among the people is promoted by governments so that they could deviate from the responsibilities towards the people. Once the government comes in to that situation it is difficult for them to control the crimes in the county. The Chief ruler of the country should practice non-violence and care for the countrymen. He or she should develop patience within to solve problems of the people. Even for the convicts he or she should have sympathy and understand why such a crime was committed. For such crimes not to happen in the future the ruler should solve such problems. The Buddhist concept as whole rejects violence and the inhuman ways of treating the people.

RIGHT TO EQUALITY

According to the United Nations declaration on human rights, all the time in front of the law every person should be treated the same way.²² Therefore the human rights of the people are accepted by the law. No one can change the laws of the human rights which are composed by the people itself. The concept of human rights on the Buddhist teachings is more human than the laws. According to the concept of human rights on Buddhist teachings, the human rights should be more tilted towards humanity than the lines on the laws.

There are different sides on the law. There are loopholes in the laws how much they try to make perfect laws. The *dhammacakka*²³ or the laws within the dhamma are reasonable to all and are taught in the most human way protecting the rights of all living beings. These are not confirmed to the people alone. These laws are the same for the

²² Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p. 16. 'All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination'.

²³ Chakkavatisihanādasutta, D III 57-83.

animals and all other living beings. The teachings of the Buddhism have taken the humans to the top and a place that no other can reach. These teaching try to find the way to liberation and Nirvana with ending up all sufferings of all humans.

The declaration on human rights also says that every person will be treated the same in front of the law. There should not be any discrepancy on this. But unfortunately in many countries there have many instances that the law has two separate hands for the affluent and another for the poor masses. The first should be to respect every person in the same way and accept them as any other person in the society. Any person in the society no matter what social status or what high position they are in the society should be given the same punishment as if the same was done by a poor person. This judgment should not have a difference of religion. Cast creed, social status or any other fact.

If every person is the same in front of the law then it must be the same at the judiciary. The judiciary has the prime responsibility to treat all as the same and to give the protection for the people without considering the social status, cast, creed or the religion of any person. Emperor Asoka emphasized the importance of the equality of all people in the society and the equal rights every person has. He stressed the importance of the laws and it should be the same for everyone no matter who the person was. He has introduced new administrative structure just to maintain the society by means of dhamma.²⁴ According to the written history he was one of the Kings who executed the law in the most reasonable way. The same laws were applied to the King. He was not above the law. He was only a caretaker of the people of the country. No King or a head of state can have different laws for the different nationalities in one country. Once, King Elara gave the punishment to his own son in accordance with the law without caring any personal relation.²⁵ The equality of people in front of the law means no one should have special concessions. The human rights vested on the people through the constitution of the country or by the law should be protected by the Judiciary. In case of disputes that cannot be solved amicably the people should have the right to seek the help of the Judiciary. The judiciary cannot be partial. They must treat all people the same way.

²⁴Ramashnkar Thrpathi, **History of Ancient India**, (Delhi: Mortilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd, reprinted in 2006), pp.173-74.

²⁵Mhv. xxi. 16-18.

According to the Buddhist concept, the priority of a constitution of the country should be the welfare of the people of its country. Every reason to lead a peaceful life is mentioned in the Buddhist teachings.

According to the Tipiṭaka there had been the most developed judiciary in the past to solve the problems of the lay people and the monks. During this time the judgments given were very reasonable and they were given only after going in to the root of the problem.²⁶ Such a judiciary never violated the human rights of the people.

RIGHT TO JUSTICE

According to the declaration of the United Nations, no one can take into custody any person by force or by using the powers of the governments or to detain such persons or to deport them.²⁷ Taking any person into custody for no valid reason is a violation of the human rights. Every person has the right to seek justice through the law. Until such a person is pronounced a convict, that person remains not guilty. Any judgment can be given only if the person is proved wrong beyond doubt. If not, any judgment will be a violation of the human rights.

Every human has the right to seek independent justice to their problems. Until a person is convicted that person remains a suspect only. This clause on the declaration of human rights tries to protect the people of their rights at times of judgment. This also emphasizes the importance of respecting every person in the same way. A judiciary that is appointed with the disciplines of the Buddhist teaching will always be independent. They would be very reasonable. This is evident in the Mahāparinibbāṇasutta of the Dīghanikāya.²⁸ In the *Vajji* Kingdom, before a decision is made by the judiciary, an intense inquiry was held to make sure the person is the real culprit of the complaint. In this kingdom not only one

²⁶ U Dhamminda, A Translation into English of the Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni Patimokkhas, (Myanmar:1990), p.129 “Settling in the presence of” can be used (sammukhāvinayo). 2. “Settling according to mindfulness” can be used (sativinayo). 3. “Settling because of madness” can be used (amūlhavinayo). 4. “Settling by confession” can be performed (patinñāya). 5. “Settling by the decision of the majority” can be used (yebhuyyasikā). 6. “Settling by a legal act of the Sangha for dealing with evil bhikkhus” can be used (tassapāpiyasikā). 7. “Settling by covering with grass” can be used (tiṇavattharako).

²⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p. 20. ‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile’.

²⁸ D II 71-167.

time the judgment was given but the convict was referred to two other judges to make sure the person was wrong. This gave the suspect more human rights than any other Kingdom at that time in the world. It also made sure that the suspect was not penalized for their cast or creed. Every person was treated in the same way. Such Buddhist Kingdoms that time in the world set an example for the protection of human rights.²⁹

According to the Human rights declaration of the United Nations, every suspect has the right to remain unconvinced until the open courts convicts that person and that person has the right to defend him of the charges levied on that person.³⁰ If anyone commits a crime or does anything against the law, the courts must decide on that person according to the laws that prevailed at the time of committing the crime. No courts can use any amendments made after the crime was committed to give the punishment of the offender. In this sentence emphasize is made on four points.

1. Until the charges are proved the suspect remains un-convicted.
2. The right to defend himself
3. To solve the problem in open courts
4. No law can be amended to convict the person

When inquiring a complaint or a case it must be done in front of the suspect. In the old days the charges when proved was given to the King for the judgment and the King always referred the judgments given in the past for such crimes and judgment was given accordingly. In those days the Monks before making a decision on a person had to consider the four disciplines as follows;³¹

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Sanghasammukathā</i> : | The gathering of the educated monks |
| 2. <i>Dhammasammukathā</i> : | The reason for the case to be true and not for false allegations |
| 3. <i>Vinayasammukathā</i> : | To avoid being extremist at judgment and to be impartial in their judgment in accordance with the discipline |
| 4. <i>Puggalasammukathā</i> : | To appoint correct persons as judges. |

²⁹ *Ibid.* 72.

³⁰ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op-cit*, p. 24. 'Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence'.

³¹ Vin.v.152.

First of all the suspect should be told of the gravity of the wrong doings done. The monks then should make him understand how the crime was done. The charges for the suspect will be forwarded only after this. After that the convict gets the right to defend himself of the charges and has the right to express his reasons.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

According to the declaration of human rights by the United Nations, no one can interfere in the personal life of another in whatever way.³² No one can look into another person's letters or correspondence or can bring disrepute to a person privately or publicly. This is a violation of human rights. In such cases the people have the right to seek the help of the judiciary. The teachings of the Buddha explain importance of a human life and teach the people to respect every human. Among these teachings, love, caring, nonviolence, and sympathy takes the top positions. The human rights are protected in society only if the people of that society understand the value of same. The society is built by the people. A simple family unit becomes a society. Therefore protecting that society is the prime responsibility of the people. According to the teachings of Buddhism it is important for every human to continuously carry out their social obligations for the society. Among these social obligations, caring for another, love, kindness, nonviolence and sympathy must be given priority.³³ Such a society will always take the others problems as their own problem and try ways to solve the problem. Every person should understand the social meaning of life and set aside the selfishness of him or her to serve the society. In one's personal life that person needs security to lead a respectful life. If that person lives with fear that another will harm him or her or do something bad for their life, that person will be living with fear all the time. Such persons will not have the confidence in themselves. Even a marriage that brings the mental

³² Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op-cit*, p. 12. 'No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks'.

³³ Nayanaponika Thera 'These four attitudes are said to be *excellent* or *sublime* because they are the right or ideal way of conduct towards living beings (*sattesu samma patipatti*). They provide, in fact, the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peace-makers in social conflict, and the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence. They level social barriers, build harmonious communities, awaken slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revive joy and hope long abandoned, and promote human brotherhood against the forces of egotism. <http://www.accesstosight.org/lib/authors/nyanaponika/wheel006.html>

peace for person is important for a person to lead a good life within the society. If that family unites have problems and arguments those persons will never be useful for the society. They would be living with anger and fear. The privacy of a person is of utmost importance. Not to have a communication gap between the societies, it is important that each family has no communication gap between them. Lies, insults to each other will only break the unity of the society. In such situations some people get addicted to liquor to forget their own problems but this will only bring them more trouble in their life. To get away from all these problems every person should pay more attention to the teachings of the Buddha.

Not only has the personal security but also of the social security depended on the shamefulness one has to commit a crime. Emperor Asoka compiled the laws in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha. The killing people and animals were forbidden. Those who got caught doing those were punished. The base of this law would have been the non-violence in Buddhism. Every person has the right to move about in this country freely or to live in any place they want. They have the right to move away from their own country, live in another country and return to their country any time they want. The contents of this clause on the human rights declaration is a right that every person is vested with at the time of birth. During the time of the life of the Buddha there was no conflict on the above clauses. From the beginning of the Buddhist era people were able to move about within their country freely. There are lots of evidences on this in history. Prince Siddhattha walked for 7 years to find the truth in life. It is evident from *Ariyapariyesanasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya*.³⁴ According to the biography of the Buddha, he spent his rainy retreats with travelling to different regions of India along with 500-1000 disciples. During the period of the Emperor Asoka, the 3rd summit on Buddhism was held and after the summit monks were asked to visit the other cities to spread the teachings of the Buddha.³⁵ It is also mentioned in the declaration of human rights that any person can live in another country legally. It also says that any person can seek the protection another country.³⁶ But in such a situation that person can seek asylum only that country agrees to provide same and for that there should be valid reasons.³⁷ Many countries have provisions to provide asylum for such persons who are victims of conflicts that arise from religious, political or race conflicts.

³⁴ M I 160.

³⁵ Mhv. xii. 1-55.

³⁶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.28.

³⁷ Ibid. 30.

Buddhism can be considered as an universal philosophy. It is valid for all the people in the world no matter what religion they belong to. During the time of the Buddha and after the teachings of Buddhism was spread in the world through followers of Buddhism.

Every male or female at the right age has the right to get married to any partner they wish to without taking into consideration the cast, creed or religion.³⁸ At the time of the marriage or at the time of divorce they both hold the same rights.

The couple that is bound to get married must consent to each other that they wish to get married. No one can force anyone to marry someone. The Unit of the family which is the foundation of the society should have the fullest protection by the government. In the 3rd chapter on human rights declaration this is mentioned. According to the social, religious and traditions the family rules will change. There are certain rules that families have adopted for centuries and they will continue with those traditions. Although there is a mention of the rules of the family the protection of the family will vary depending on their social status.

Buddhism that encourages the family life for the development of the society also emphasizes the behavior of both the husband and wife in a family unit. A lot has been said and five points have been mentioned in the *Singalovādasutta*.³⁹ The responsibilities of the husband as well as the responsibilities of the wife towards a better family life are explained in this sutta. In this, it also mentioned that it is the responsibility of the parents to give in marriage their children at the right time in their lives. For the development of a family Buddhism stress the need of cordial relationship between the husband and the wife. Illicit love affairs by the female or the male will bring disaster to the family. To avoid such situations both the husband and the wife must have good understanding between them. In most cases of family disputes it is the wife who suspect the husband of other affairs that is because the husband is away from the house most of the time working. Some tend to suspect the husbands for no reasons. This is where the family dispute begins. The housewives must understand that it is the husband who keeps the fires burning at house. It is him who takes care of the wife and the children in all their needs. It is the responsibility of the wife to take care of the husband and talk in kind words. She should be able to satisfy her desires only through one man. The husbands too must understand that the wives will do all the work at home, take care of the children, do the washing, and take care of the children's education and their protection most of the day. Therefore the husbands too must treat the wives with respect.

³⁸ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op-cit*, p.34.

³⁹ D III 180-193.

RIGHT TO PROPERTY

As mentioned in According to the declaration of human rights by the United Nations every person has the right to own the wealth alone or as a family unit.⁴⁰ No one can take away their wealth by force. Not even any government for any reason whatsoever. This clause on the human rights declaration protects the right of the people for their wealth. This is in the Buddhist concept on human rights. It is important to protect the wealth of a person of family for the development of the society.

During the time of the Buddha the economy started to develop and through this a new class of people were born with wealth. The new wealthy people started to invest their earnings for the development of the society in planning the economy for the government and the people. They also invested heavily on developing the society into a more religious society. They spent the earning not only for their benefit but also for the benefit of the entire society. Therefore it was important to provide them with protection.

From the inception the Buddhists considered the wealth or the land of the temples as public property. This is the reason that the people who could afford spent their wealth to build *Vihara* and *Temples* in this public land for the benefit of the whole society. According to the teachings of the Buddha the personal wealth of a person can be used for their own benefit and also for the benefit of the entire society. Whatever the donations given for the monks was not for their personal use but for the use of the entire monks.⁴¹

The human rights declaration also mentions the right of the people to think independently and believe in any religion they want.⁴² This also gives a person to change their faith in any religion or to pay respect to their religion privately or publicly or to teach the others their religion or to spread their religion.

The right to think or the right to inquire will only develops the culture of the country. The religious belief is also important for this. The independent vision of a person will help that person to have a better vision for the future. Therefore it is important that the right of thinking is considered a human right. There could be situations where a person can say his

⁴⁰ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op-cit*, p.36. 1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. 2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

⁴¹ In the Buddhist tradition, when the offering is given to the sangha, that offering is considered as belong to every member of the community or the sangha

⁴² Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.38.

or her thinking is right but the society may not accept same. In such situations it's better to have a dialog between them to understand which concept is accepted by all. The thoughts of others are very important.

Vision, inquiring and independence are special in Buddhist teachings. The main concept on *dhamma* is to make people think independently. Dhamma is open. There are no hidden agendas on it. The more the dhamma is open the better it shines.⁴³ After listening to the dhamma one can decide to accept it or reject it. If that person does not accept the dhamma that person should have the right to find liberation of life through other ways. The dhamma is for the intelligent and not for the fools.⁴⁴ Without an independent vision one cannot understand the dhamma.

In the *Kālāmasutta*,⁴⁵ the Buddha has given right to each person to accept or to reject any teaching after going through his/her own investigation. The person listening should be able to argue within that person to see if that person can accept what is preached. This is where the teachings of Buddhism are completely independent and protect the rights of the people. There are many obstacles in the society for a person to take independent decisions. These obstacles can come from the society or from the rulers so that no one can challenge their rule. These can stop the development of a person or a society in general.

RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH

According to the human rights declaration of United Nation, every person has the right to express their feeling and thoughts.⁴⁶ Every person has the right to get information through media not considering the limits of the country they live.

Buddhism that paves way for intellectuals and scholars provides the freedom for their thoughts and to express them without fear. This is the reason many Buddhist traditions began in the world taking the freedom given in Buddhism. After the passing away of the Buddha there were some arguments about the dhamma and disciplines which resulted in the birth of

⁴³ A I 282.

⁴⁴ A VI VIII 228.

⁴⁵ A I 188.

⁴⁶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit.*, p.40. 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

many Nikāyas. During the time of Emperor Asoka there were 18 Nikayas. The reason for so many Nikayas to be born was the freedom of speech and the freedom of thinking given in the Buddhist teachings.

The declaration of human rights of the United Nations also gives the right to the people to gather peacefully and to have associations to fight for their rights.⁴⁷ No one can force another to join any association. Any person has the right to put forward the collective ideas of an association to protect their rights. This right has been confirmed for the people in the teachings of the Buddha. During the time of the Buddha forming of associations were encouraged.⁴⁸ The decisions made for problems was collective decisions and at the consent of the majority.

In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*⁴⁹ explains the process adopted in those days about the meetings held by a large gathering. The seven conditions of welfare practiced by the Vajjians were admired by the Buddha and also adopted them to his order. Among those seven factors, frequent assemblies were one of the factors and until the Vajjians practice it, their kingdom was undefeated.⁵⁰ These meeting should be very regular meeting so that delay in sorting the problems could be minimized. The Buddha when could not make his own decisions on certain matters always consented for the majority ideas. He accepted the ideas of the majority only if that was in accordance with the Dhamma. The associations that were formed must operate in a democratic way. No one should be forced to join any association and the constitution of such associations should have the minimum number of office bearers to conduct meetings, secret voting system to decide on sensitive issues, transparent dealings with others etc. These facts are clear in the Buddhist teachings.

According to the Human rights declaration, any person in any country has the right to elect their own leaders for the government by way of secret vote.⁵¹ Every person has the right to contest for such positions and every person has the right to get government jobs according to their educational background.

⁴⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.42.

⁴⁸ Laṭukikopamasutta. M I 179.

⁴⁹ D II 72-168.

⁵⁰ Ānanda, as long as the Vajjians hold regular and frequent assemblies, they may be expected to prosper and not decline. Murice Walshe, the Long Discourses of the Buddha, (Kandy: BPS, 1996), 231.

⁵¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.44.

The powers of the government are vested on them by the people of the country. This is given to them from a secret vote at the elections of office bearers to rule the country. These voting system must be transparent and should not be tampered by the government in power to return into power. But in the developing and under developed countries vote rigging is common. Many rulers return to power not to serve the people but to serve their families and earn as much as they could during the time they are in power.

During the time of the Buddha in the India, the Monarchy and the democratic systems were in existed. The democratic system gave more freedom and independence for the people while the Monarchy system had reservations. Therefore the Buddhist accepted the democratic system as a better governing system.⁵² Most of the associations during this time were confined to the upper cast of the people. But yet there seems to be more democracy in those associations during those days. The association arrived at decisions after long discussions and with the majority votes. Therefore it was clear that those associations were not dictators. Since these associations had many members they appointed executive committees to carry out the day to day requirements of the public. The executive committee was under the main association and they were held responsible by the main association for the acts. In the Ganathantra system even the Chief of the Army was elected by the majority vote. There were no favorites. The Buddha who appreciated the government with democratic systems gave the highest authority to the general public. Through this the people were able to elect their leaders and gave them the powers to rule the country.

The discipline laws were enforced by the Sangha associations; both the monarchy system and the democratic system were used. All monks were compelled to attend the Buddhist ceremonies on a full moon day. In the Sangha associations all decisions were taken with a majority vote. There were three systems for voting.⁵³

1. Secret vote
2. Open vote
3. whispering vote

The chief person who conducted the voting was a person who earned a reputation as a good person in the association and who would carry out the duties assigned to him through *dhamma*. At the end of the vote if there are no majority vote then a committee was appointed

⁵² D II 72-168.

⁵³ Vin II.99.

to solve the problem. If the committee fails to reach a decision then they must refer it back to the Sangha association. This time another vote will be taken at the Sangha association to solve the problem. The sangha associations practiced a lot of independence and respected the views of all monks.

RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY

Every person has the right to have social security. Every government has the responsibility to develop the economy to eradicate poverty from the society. They should always have friendly relationships with other countries to get help from them or to lend the help those countries want to develop the economy. It must also be noted that development of Economy alone cannot develop a country. The benefits of the economic development should reach the grass root levels of the population and not confined to a certain amount of people. Steps should be taken to eradicate the social differences within the society. For this each country must realize the natural resources they have and make sure those resources are divided to all the people In the country and not for the elite.

In the Buddhist economic concept the main clause is the dhamma. If all the rulers go by the Dhamma, there are not many who will suffer. The dhamma teaches the way to treat all humans the same way. The King has the responsibility to carry out the governing in accordance with the Dhamma.⁵⁴ All citizens should be the same. In this way the economic benefit will reach the lowest level of the society.

According to the Buddhist teachings the king must take the responsibility to develop the economy of the state. There are 3 steps to follow.

1. The State must sponsor the production process in the country
2. Distribute the product to reach every corner of the state
3. Take care of the administration and the workers.

If one lives by farming agricultural products and give a share to the King, The kind in return should provide them the required seeds for agriculture. It is the responsibility of the King or the government to provide the capital for those who are engaged in agricultural, dairy products or trading and encourage them to develop that industry. At the same time the King or the government should take care of the welfare of the government workers. By

⁵⁴ Cakkavattisīhanādasutta, D III 61-62.

doing so every person in the state will receive the benefits they deserve. This will eradicate the poverty. The King or the government is responsible not only for the people but also for the animals and all living beings including the trees and the creepers.

RIGHT TO WORK

According to the United Nation's declaration on human right, everyone has a right to work on his/her capacity.⁵⁵ People are independent to find their own livelihood in right manner. Employers are eligible to get payment equality to their work. It is obvious in now days, almost everywhere in the world, various conflicts between employee and employer. The relationship between two parties seems very far away. In the days of the Buddha most people in India was involved in self-employment. These depended on their cast. People at that time put a lot of effort to earn a reasonable living and helped the development of the society. Their needs were limited.

In the modern world with the increased population there are many problems for jobs. Therefore it is important to protect themselves from this situation. This becomes the responsibility of the governments. Every person cannot be employed in the government sector but the government must lay the foundation for the people to do their own business or industry and through those to provide more employment. For this the governments have the responsibility to provide the required infrastructure for such industries. They should give them tax concessions and the required protection and the security. Every person needs to live a respectable life. It is their right. When a government deprives them this right there is nothing the people can do.

Since the teachings of Buddhism accept all humans as same, and all are independent the worker must take care of when preparing the salaries paid. There should not be any discrepancies for the same tiers in the work place. There should not be any favours for personal benefits. All tiers should be treated the same way. The religion, colour, cast or creed should not be considered.

⁵⁵ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.48.

RIGHT TO REST

According to the United Nation's declaration on human right, every ones have right to get enough rest from their works.⁵⁶ In related to the modern context, this seems very important. Due to various social conjunctions, human beings suffer with lacking of enough rest from their daily activities. Mental stress is the result of having no enough rest. Many people suffer with mental stress due to too much works and responsibilities. In the Singalovādasutta⁵⁷, the 5th condition for the master towards the worker is the adequate "rest" he should provide the worker.⁵⁸ The Employer should also provide the entertainment for the workers to protect their health. Good entertainment will always make a person healthy. Even during the hours of working a person should have some rest in between the working hours.

A peaceful mind way from the work is always the best way to regain the energy and the strength and develop the mind. A person who does yoga, Meditation,, writers, scientists or artists needs rest in their mind to concentrate on their next assignment. If a person works continuously for many days without rest, that person's body will not respond the same way as it used to be. This is why Buddhism stresses the need of "rest" for the body. The best creations in the world were always a result of the peaceful mind of the creators.

It is the responsibility of the government to provide ways of entertainment for the people. The ways of entertainment provided will show the quality of a government and the responsibilities of a government towards the people. In the Buddhist teachings it says a person's free time should be spent in a meaningful way. This is important for a person who seeks the personal development of that person. The free time spent on entertainment should be according to the dhamma. Such entertainment should not disturb another person.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 50.

⁵⁷ D III 192.

⁵⁸ 'letting them off work at the right time' Murice Walshe, The Long Discourses of the Buddha, *Op. cit.*, p.468.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

25th article of the United Nation's declaration on human right concerns about the above health, foods, cloths, etc.,⁵⁹ Every person has the right for clothes, food, shelter, medical facilities and social protection. The government must take these as priorities. They should see to the welfare of all the people immaterial of the social status. But unfortunately today especially in the developing countries, the politicians or the rulers of the country takes care only of a certain segment of the society. This segment must support whatever they do even all the human rights violations. Such people are treated with a different law and the rest a different law. This was evident with so many court cases over the last 10 years where the definite criminals were let go scot free. Many journalists were killed by unknown gunmen but it is obvious who did it as those journalists tried to highlight the wrong doings of the government. It is the duty of the government to provide shelter for the poorest that have become so poor with the economic policies of the governments over the decades past. It is the duty of the government to protect people or help them recover from natural disaster. It is also the responsibility of the government to protect the older people in the society as during their younger days most of these people have put in their energy to develop the society or worked for the government. These are human rights of the people. If any government cannot or not able to provide the basic human rights of the people, then they should resign and hand over the power of leading to the country who is capable of providing the basic human rights. But unfortunately in most of the under developed or developing countries the governments are the most corrupted. The Politicians use their power over the people to get done what they want and most of them come to the position not to serve the country but rip off the public funds of the country collected from taxes paid by the poor masses for the benefit of the families.

The protection for pregnant women and infants are another responsibility of the government. Every pregnant woman no matter what social status she holds and every infant born has the right for protection, food, shelter. For this they should have means of earning their living. The responsibility of the government is to provide ways and means to eradicate poverty and to find ways where the people can earn a living. Collecting taxes even on the basic food of the people without providing them a decent living is against the teaching of the Buddha.

⁵⁹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.52.

The development of a society is based on their respect for the religion and the economic development. During Buddha's time, many kings adopted the teachings of the Buddha to rule their state. They provided more human rights for the people and they tried to help the poor in many ways. The *Sigālovādasutta*⁶⁰ teaches the way to earn in an honest way and to re-invest the earnings for the benefit of the society where more people would be employed and will have a better living.⁶¹ To develop the personality of the society they must have a decent living. Without this no society can develop. This is what the teachings of the Buddha stress.

According to Buddhism the prime importance is the health of the society. First of all the society must be healthy. The health also includes the mental health of people. There is no medicine in the world than the teaching of Buddhism to heal the mental stress and the sicknesses of the people. Therefore it is so very important to preach the teachings of the Buddhism in a language that could be understood by all. The Buddha was the teacher of all doctors of mental health.⁶² The teachings of the Buddha for good health of the people are much more advanced than the modern medicines.

The place parents are given in the teachings of Buddhism is second only to the Buddha. The responsibility of the children is to take care of the ageing parents. In the Buddhist teachings the woman is considered a great human as a mother and a wife. The mothers love for a child remains the same no matter what social status they are. In the mothers love for a child it does not matter if it is a legal child or a child born of an illegal affair. The Buddha treated the low caste Sunīta and Sopāka the same way he treated Prince Rāhula. The Buddhist teachings give special attention to the rights of the children. It is the 1st responsibility of the parents to give a proper education for the children at the best way possible. This is mentioned in the *Sigālovādasutta*.⁶³ The children have the right to receive the education through the parents and at the same time to have the security and protection.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ The wise man trained and disciplined -Shines out like a beacon-fire,
He gathers wealth just as the bee -gathers honey, and it grows
Like an ant-hill higher yet -with wealth so gained that layman can
Devote it to his people's good, Maurice Walshe, the Long Discourses of the Buddha, *Op. cit.*, p. 466.

⁶² Buddha was called as 'bhesajjaguru' (the master of the medicine).

⁶³ D III 192.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

According to the United Nation's declaration on human right, every person has the right to receive the required education.⁶⁴ At least at the primary level the education should be given free of charge by the underdeveloped or developing countries. Every student must have the right to receive the technical and a professional education and the governments are responsible for providing this education. The government must realize the biggest investment will be on the education of the children in that country. But this education must be in accordance with the Dhamma. Depending on the capabilities of a child a higher education must be given and it the right of the child to receive such education. A personality of a person is built on the education that person receives. It is also important to build a harmonious environment among all religions during the period of education of a child. Every school will have children from different religions beliefs. They must be taught to respect all other religions. This will be a step towards the religious harmony promoted by the United Nations.

The parents have the right to decide what kind of an education the child should receive at the primary stage. The Buddhist education must not have any barriers on cast, creed or race. All have the right to receive the same education. At the beginning only males could receive the education. But later this situation changed and all were allowed to receive the same education. After the enlightenment of the Buddha, the Buddhist teachings expanded in many directions of the world. Some of the followers of Buddhism refused to continue the original teachings of the Buddha. Therefore the monks too divided themselves in to two sections. From this division it helped to teach Buddhism in accordance with the changing social, economic situation in the world. The highest achievement in Buddhist teachings is to produce a person with the highest discipline. Therefore the Buddhist education is not merely an education. It goes beyond that to teach a person of the high disciplines, human values and the actions of a person towards the society. Its prime objective is to produce a person with complete personality. This will be the reason for a development in a society. Since the Buddhist social vision is centered on social conflicts the relationship between the Buddhist teachings and society is much closer than any other religion and its society.

⁶⁴ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.54.

RIGHT TO CULTURE

27th article of the United Nation's declaration of human right is the right taking part of any cultural event. Every person has the right to participate on cultural events, enjoy the arts and develop themselves in sciences.⁶⁵ Every person has the right to read the books written on various subjects. Language, arts, religious rituals all belongs to the culture of a country and every human has the right to attend to these. In the Buddhist countries, like Sri Lanka, the way of life in the old society was based on the teachings of the dhamma. For most of the people to calm down their mind the teachings of the Buddha helps in many ways. The beginning of the Sinhala culture in the most refined way commenced after the arrival of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. It helped the people to respect each other, protect the human rights and it taught the people to lead the life in the most correct way without disturbing another. This teaching spread in the country within a very short time and every person in the county accepted it. Every special moment in life was connected with the damma. People began to have the greatest respect for the teachings. Even they had happiness and entertainment when learning the Dhamma.

CONCLUSION

According to the Buddhist concept on society, the society is not only the humans who live in the world but all living beings in the world are considered the society. Loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity are equal rights of all the living beings. Buddhism that pays more attention on human society has divided the society in to 6 segments and has given the complete human rights to all the 6 segments.⁶⁶ At the time when these were mentioned in Buddhist teachings the world was not so corrupted as today. But still those teachings are valid for the modern society and there is nothing to improve on those. These teaching give a lot of rights for the people who try to help develop the society.

⁶⁵ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *Op. cit*, p.56.

⁶⁶ Six directions as mentioned in the Sigālovādasutta, Mothers, fathers are the east – Teachers are the southward point Wives and children are the west – Friends and colleagues are the north Servants and workers are bellows – Ascetics, Brahmins are above These direction all should be – Honoured by a clansman true, Murice Walshe, the Long Discourses of the Buddha, *Op. cit*, 468.

The Buddha had the warmest feelings towards all animals and all living beings. The teaching which pays more attention towards the humans teaches the way to find liberation in life and to get relief from sufferings through the middle path.

There are many social obligations for a person towards the society and to help develop the society through that person's personality. That person should do all what can be done to protect the others freedom and their independence in the society more than thinking of his or her own freedom and independence. No government should try to do things against these laws by the United Nations. A person builds his her own personality only through the acceptance of that person in the society. To get accepted in the society that person should earn the respect of all which depends entirely on those persons actions towards the society.

In today's world all must obey the laws on responsibilities and rights of all the people in the world. This comprehensive declaration by the United Nations helps all the people in the world no matter what cast, creed or religion they belong to. If any person tries to go against these rights of the people that person will be going against the teachings of dhamma. The Buddhism respects all the laws on human rights declared by the United Nations in 1948. No country or no leader of a country can go against these laws of the United Nations.

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A GLANCE AT THE ABHIDHAMMA DEBATE AND RELATED TEXTS IN MYANMAR (1900-1935)



Ven. Visuddha

ABSTRACT

Controversy about the origins of the *Abhidhamma* are well known, what may not be so well known is that there was a great debate about two *Abhidhamma* post-commentaries in Myanmar. Both are commenting on the same root *Abhidhamma* commentary the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. Of the two, the first sub-commentary was written in the twelfth century and the second in the late nineteenth century. While commenting on the root text, the second criticized over two hundred points that were described in the first. It generated intensive controversy and resulted in numerous scholarly works, articles, books, and post-commentaries in Myanmar. Within 35 years after its printing (1900-1935), over forty scholarly works, both in *Pāli* and Myanmar, had been written by scholars, monks, and laymen taking a firm stand on either side. It is known as the great *Abhidhamma* debate in Myanmar. Unfortunately, most of the scholarly works were forever lost due to poor maintenance and political circumstance in Myanmar. Only few texts were preserved. This paper intends to introduce some crucial points of controversy mainly focusing on these two post-commentaries and related texts which contributed to the debate.

Keywords: Abhidhamma, Saṅgaha, Vibhāvinī, Dīpanī, Debate, Texts

INTRODUCTION

The *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* is a popular *Pāli* text, composed in approximately the twelfth century¹, and dominates *Abhidhamma* studies as it enables students to grasp the essence of Theravāda *Abhidhamma*. Ācariya Anuruddha, the text's author, attempted to extract the essence of the *Abhidhamma* and the commentarial works on it. Due to the purpose of summarizing enormous doctrines in a short and succinct manner, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* (referred to hereafter as *Saṅgaha*) is extremely terse and incomprehensible to most students unless they are guided by a competent teacher or they have ancillary commentary on it. The text is thus described figuratively as a little boat to cross the ocean of *Abhidhamma* literature. In consequence of its popularity, there is a large collection of ancillary literature on the *Saṅgaha*. There are nineteen *Pāli* post-commentaries on the *Saṅgaha* recorded in *History of Piṭaka Literature*.² Among those, two post-commentaries have attracted scholars' attention in the field of *Abhidhamma* studies because they caused the great debate about *Abhidhammā* in Myanmar.

The first is *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭīkā* (referred hereafter as to *Vibhāvinī*), written by Ācariya Sumaṅgalasāmi in the twelfth century in Sri Lanka. The author was a pupil of the eminent Sri Lankan elder Sāriputta Mahāthera and wrote two other *Abhidhamma* texts: *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī*, post-commentary on Buddhaddatta's *Abhidhammāvatāra* and *Sāratthasālinī* (*Navatīkā*) post-commentary on Dhammapāla's *Sacca-saṅkhepa*.³ The *Vibhāvinī* is very popular in Myanmar, under the names “*Ṭīkāhla* (beautiful *ṭīkā*) and *Ṭīkākyaw* (famous *ṭīkā*)”. It is called ‘beautiful’ because its writing style is articulate and beautiful. The name was later changed historically due to exclamation that “the *ṭīkā* makes me famous” by Ācariya Ariyavaṃsa who wrote a key text to the *Vibhāvinī* “*Maṇṭṣāramaṇjūsāṭīkā*” after being been enlightened by the *Vibhāvinī* — hence the name ‘*Ṭīkākyaw*’.⁴

¹K. R Norman, *A history of Indian Literature, Vol II (pāli literature)*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), p.151.

²U Yam, 1957, *Pitakatthamaing (History of Piṭaka Literature)*, (Yangon, Myanmar: Hamsathavathi publishing house, 1957), p.121.

³G. P. Malasekera., *Pāli literature of Ceylon*, (Colombo: Gunasena & Col, LTD., 1958), p.200.

⁴Yazathinkyam., *Sāsanālaṅkārasātam (History of Buddhist lineage)*, (Yangon: The Religious Affairs Dept., 2008) p.138.

The second is *Paramatthadīpanī* (referred to hereafter as *Dīpanī*) written by Ledī Saydaw, a Myanmar scholar-monk-(1846-1923). Contradictory to Ācariya Ariyavaṃsa, he was not satisfied with some points of definition on the *Saṅgha* by the former post-commentaries, especially the *Vibhāvinī*. Therefore he wrote a new Pāli post-commentary on the *Saṅgha*, and mentioned that he had been requested to write a post-commentary on the *Saṅgha* by those who felt that the former was not satisfactory. Taking what he regarded as essential from previous commentaries, he wrote a new post-commentary on the *Saṅgha*. This work seems to imply that while he takes the essential interpretations, he will turn down any interpretation if it is, to him, unnecessary or erroneous.

In the *Dīpanī*, Ledī Saydaw mentions three post-commentaries⁵ which contain the controversial points and points out and criticizes over two hundred points, most of points from the *Vibhāvinī* and few from the other, which are, to him, not acceptable and to be rejected except only a very few points. Therefore, he is well known as a scholar who rejected the *Vibhāvinī*.

THE CAUSE OF THE ABHIDHAMMA DEBATE

The *Dīpanī* was completed in 1897 CE and first published in 1900 CE by Kavimiyathman Pess House, Yangon, Myanmar. Since then, it has been published five times in Myanmar. The fifth edition is well arranged and each point of controversy is numbered systematically by the editorial team which consists of Pāli scholars. Two hundred and seventy points are numbered in the fifth edition. However, the exact number of points is to be checked carefully because different numbers are stated in different scholarly works: 246 points in Min Khing Ṭikākyaw-Gaṇṭhi-Thit⁶; 263 points in Degree-ṭikā⁷; 245 points in CSCD,⁸ the

⁵Three are (1) the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgha-porāṇa-ṭikā* (*Porāṇaṭikā*), a sub-commentary on the *Saṅgha* by Ācariya Navavimalabuddhi; (2) the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭikā*, a sub-commentary on the *Saṅgha* by Ācariya Sumanālasāmi; and (3) the *Paramatthamañjūsā* or *Visuddhimaggamahāṭikā* (*mahāṭikā*), a sub-commentary on the *Visuddhimagga* by Ācariya Dhammapāla (Ito paṭṭhāya ca ṭikāyanti vutte imassa saṅghassa dvīsu sīhalaṭikāsu pathamā ṭikā daṭṭhabbā. Vibhāvanīyanti vutte eatarahi pākāṭa dutīyā. ṭikāsūti vutte dvepi. Mahāṭikāyanti vutte visuddhimagge mahāṭikā daṭṭhabbā. (*Dīpanī*))

⁶Sayādaw Bhaddanta Vicārinda, **Min Khing Ṭikākyaw-Gaṇṭhi-Thit**, (Yangon, Myanmar: Paññāsippaṃ Pitakat press, 1920), p.440.

⁷U Sāsana, **Degree-ṭikā**, (Mandalay, Myanmar: Yadanasiṭṭhi Publishing house, 1934), p.149

⁸Chatṭha Saṅgāyanā, retrieved 3,2,1917, www.tipitaka.org

works of Myint Swe⁹ and Erik Braun¹⁰; and 325 points in the work of Bhikkhu Bhodhi¹¹. Ledī Sayadaw did not mention the exact number of points that he thought existed, rather he used symbol phrases to express different points: “*vibhāvanīyaṃ pana* (in the *Vibhāvanī*, however)” ; “*ṭīkāsu pana* (in the sub-commentaries however), etc. Most of the points are rejected and very few points are supported in the *Vibhāvanī*.

The following sample sentences are used when a notion is to be rejected:

“*taṃ na sundraṃ*: that is not good.”

“*so idha nādhippeto*: that is here not desired.”

“*taṃ sabbam na paccetabbaṃ*: all of that should not be believed.”

“*taṃ sabbam na yuttaṃ*: all of that is not proper.”

The following sentences are used when the notions are to be supported:

“*taṃ pāliyaṃ anāgatāpi yujjatiyeva*: even though not coming to the *Pāli* canon, that is indeed reasonable.”

“*taṃ pi tena pariyāyena yujjatiyeva*: that is too reasonable in meaning of that formula.”

“*taṃ pi yuttaṃ viya dissati*: that is also seem to proper.”

Because of such strong objectionable remarks, the *Dīpanī* has become a popular text among scholars and those who are fond of the *Vibhāvinī* have been frustrated by it. As a result, there was a great debate about these two *Abhidhamma* post-commentaries.

⁹Myint Swe, **Ṭīkā-Sipwe (the war of sub-commentaries: an article included in the translation of the Dīpanī)**, Yangon, Myint Swe press, 1992). p. xi.

¹⁰E Braun, Ledī Sayadaw, *Abhidhamma, and the Development of the Modern Insight Meditation in Burma*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 2008), p.109.

¹¹Bhikkhu Bodhi., **A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma**, (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2007), p.17

THE COMMON FEATURES OF TWO SUB-COMMENTARIES

A general observation of these two reveals that the *Vibhāvinī* has key commentary to the *Maṇisāramañjūsāṭṭikā* by Ariyavaṃsa while the *Dīpanī* has key commentary to the *Paramatthānuddīpanī* by Ledī Sayadaw himself. The author of the *Vibhāvinī* mostly focuses on the *Abhidhamma-Anuṭṭikā* by Ācariya Dhammapāla,¹² whereas the author of the *Dīpanī* the *Abhidhamma-Mūlaṭṭikā* by Ācariya Ānandathera.¹³ As the *Dīpanī* obviously states its disagreements, the *Vibhāvinī* also mentions its disagreements with prior commentaries in certain cases such as, “*keci pana imam atthaṃ asallakkhetvā va*, (some teachers, not having observed this particular meaning)” “*keci pana cittassa ṭhitikkhaṇaṃ paṭisedhenti*, (some teachers refuses a moment of the existence of consciousness).

Generally speaking, except very few points, both *ṭīkā*s accept the basic concepts of the *Saṅgaha*: four ultimate truths, 89 or 121 kinds of consciousness, 52 kinds of mental factor, and 28 kinds of matter and so on. What causes controversy is interpretations, definitions on the basic concepts of the *Saṅgaha*.

CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE DEFINITION OF NIBBĀNA

According to the commentarial tradition, both *ṭīkā*s define and treat *pāli-viggaha*¹⁴ differently. The *Vibhāvinī* makes *viggaha* of *nibbāna* in two ways that are a adverbial compound (*abyayībhāva-samās*), “*Bhavābhavaṃ vinanato saṃsibbanato vānasāṅkhātāya taṇhāya nikkhantanti nibbānaṃ*” (“nibbāna” is that which is liberated from craving named as “vāna” as it stitches and fasten existence and great-existence), and a way of instrumental sense (*karaṇasādhana*), “*nibbāti vā etena rāgaggiādiko ti nibbānaṃ*” (‘or that by means of which the fires of greed etc., are extinguished (nibbāti) is nibbāna’).¹⁵

The *Dīpanī* describes it as locative sense (*okāsasādhana*), “*nibbāyanti sabbe vaṭṭadukkhasantāpā etasmi nti nibbānaṃ* (a particular place in which all sufferings and

¹² CSCD *Abhidhammavatārapurāṇaṭṭikā* (*Evañca katvā vuttaṃ ācariyadhammapālatherena*)

¹³ CSCD *Paramatthadīpanī* (*Ayaṃ ācariyānandatherassa adhippāyo*)

¹⁴ *Vividaṃ gaṇhāti etthāti viggaho*. It is way of resolution or definition or interpretation of words according to their elements.

¹⁵ Rupert Gethin, *Summary of the tipics of Abhidhamma*, (Bristol: PTS, 2007), p.9

torments of the cycle of rebirth extinguished, is *nibbāna*¹⁶). In this case, Ledī Sayadaw agrees with former post-commentaries in the sense of adverbial compound, but argues and criticizes that the definition by way of instrumental sense is not proper as *Nibbāna* does not function in destroying defilements unlike the path (*magga*) by which defilements are destroyed.¹⁷

CONTROVERSY ABOUT PROMPTED OR UNPROMPTED

For another example, the *Saṅgha* classifies consciousness into specific types such as consciousness accompanied by joy (*soṃanassasahagata*), accompanied by equanimity (*upekkhāsahagata*), associated with wrong views (*diṭṭhigatasampayutta*) dissociated from wrong view (*diṭṭhigatavipayutta*), prompted (*sasaṅkhārika*) and unprompted (*asaṅkhārika*), and so on. The *Saṅgha* mentions the classification of consciousness rooted in greed and hatred (*lobhamūlacitta* and *dosamūlacitta*) and whether they are prompted or unprompted, but in the classification of consciousness rooted in ignorance (*mohamūlacitta*), it does not mention whether they are prompted or unprompted. In this case, the *Vibhāvinī* and *Mahāṭṭkā* classify these *cittas* into neither prompted nor unprompted for the reason that they are lack of nature to be instigated by energy. (*sabhāvatikkhatāya ussāhetabbatāya abhāvato saṅkhārabhedopi nesaṃ natthi*). The *Dīpanī* rejects this reason saying first it is not in accordance with the commentary, which defines two kinds of ignorance in terms of *saṅkhāra*, and classifies these *cittas* into unprompted for the reason that these *mohamūlacittas* naturally occur by means of their causal multitude intrinsic nature without motivation by other (*vinā saṅkhārena kevalaṃ pakati paccaya gaṇa vaseneva pavattanasamatthatā*).

Although the *Dīpanī* cites the commentary in the mentioned case, it discounts some statements of the commentary in other cases. This can be seen most obviously in its definitions in the *rūpavacara* and *arūpāvacara* section. The *Dīpanī* says that after having known the true and clear meanings which follows the *Pāḷi* canon, it would not be of benefit to take other equivocal meaning, even the statements of the commentary (*nanu aṭṭhasāliniyameva teca aññeca atthā vuttāti. saccaṃ. bhūtaṃ pana suvisadaṃ pāḷianugataṃ atthaṃ ñatvā kiṃ vikkhepenāti*).

¹⁶ Author's translation (No English translation of the *Dīpanī* is available)

¹⁷ *vibhāvanīyaṃ pana “nibbāti vā etena rāgaggiādikoti nibbāna”ntipi vuttaṃ. Taṃ na sundaraṃ. Na hi magge viya nibbāne katthaci karaṇasādhanaṃ diṭṭhaṃ. Na ca nibbānaṃ nibbūtikriyāsādhane rāgā dikassa kattuno sahaṅkārīpaccayo hotīti.*(the *Dīpanī*)

CONTROVERSY ABOUT SURĀPĀNA BEING KAMMAPATHA OR NOT

Moreover, the *Dīpanī*'s arguments seem to stand against the *Pāli* canon. For example, the *Saṅgha* presents the section of *kammapatha* (way of action), which gives rise to one's rebirth, i.e., *kusalakammapatha* (way of wholesome action) will give rise to a rebirth in a happy state and *akusalakammapatha* to a rebirth in an unhappy state. The *Saṅgha* mentions ten kinds of misconduct (*dasaduccarita*): three bodily actions (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct), four verbal actions (lying, slander, harsh speech, vain talk), and three mental actions (covetousness, ill will, wrong view). These actions are called *akusalakammapatha*. But *surāpāna*, drinking alcohol, is not taken into this account. The question is whether *surāpāna* should be regarded as *kammapatha* (way of action) or not. In this case, the *Vibhāvinī* regards it as *kammapatha* for a reason that drinking liquor is included in *kāmesu micchācāra* (here regarding the meaning as sensual misconduct), because it is a kind of sensual desire for tastes (*surāpānampi ettheva saṅgayhatī ti vadanti rasasaṅkhātesu kāmesu micchācārabhāvato*).

The *Dīpanī* does not accept fully the reason and argues it should not be regarded exactly as *kammapatha* because its function is uncertain regarding giving rise to a rebirth, i.e. *surāpāna-kamma*, action of drinking alcohol is not *ekanta-akusalakammapatha* (an unfailing way of unwholesome action) (*tasmā idaṃpi paṭisandhijanane anekantikattā tattha sarūpato na vuttanti*). The *Dīpanī*'s argument seems to reverse the teaching of the Buddha, as in e.g. *Duccaritavipākasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, *aṭṭhakanipāta*. The *sutta* states undesirable consequence of three bodily actions, four verbal actions and *surāpāna*, drinking alcohol. It is said that drinking alcohol will lead to hell, a rebirth as a common animal etc.-

CONTROVERSY ABOUT LIFE-SPAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Another crucial point is an argument on *cittakkhaṇa*, consciousness-moment, or life-span of consciousness. The *Saṅgha* mentions three moments of *citta*: arising (*uppāda*), presence (*ṭhiti*), and dissolution (*bhaṅga*). The *Vibhāvinī* follows this theory but the *Dīpanī* does not. This issue has divided the commentators obviously. The *Anuṭṭikā*, the *Saṅgha* and the *Vibhāvinī* take a side of three moments and the *Samyutta-aṭṭhakathā*, the *Mūlaṭṭikā* and the *Dīpanī* take the opposite side. The main citation for three moments is the *Saṅkhatallakkhaṇasutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, *tikanipātapāḷi*. The *sutta* states three characteristics of the conditioned things (*saṅkhata*), that are arising (*uppāda*), passing away (*vaya* or *bhaṅga*), and alteration while enduring (*ṭhita*). The main citation for two moments

is the *Citta-yamaka* of the *Abhidhammapāḷi* which states only arising and dissolution.¹⁸ Both sides are able to illustrate their arguments logically and textually, in a debate regarding not just exegesis but the canon itself.

RELATED TEXTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ABHIDHAMMA DEBATE

As mentioned before, many texts regarding the debate were forever lost due to poor maintenance and political circumstance in Myanmar. Some books which are still available to the date will be briefly introduced.

ĀṆKURA-ṬĪKĀ

Āṇkura-ṭīkā is a *Pāḷi* text written by *Sayadaw Vimalābhivaṃsālaṅkāra*, living in Nay Ying village, Pakhangyi township, at Saka era 1271 (1909 CE), printed at Pyigyimandain Press House, Yangon, revised by *Pāḷi* teacher Saya Pyay. Its full name is “*Āṇkuraṭṭikā or Thingyo Mahāṭṭikāthitpat*”. It contains 442 pages. It is regarded as fifth post-commentary on the *Saṅgha* in other texts such as the Decree-*ṭīkā*. The *Āṇkuraṭṭikā* is a text which defending for *Vibhāvinī-ṭīkā*. The author was famous and well-known as *Talinegone Sayaday* and he wrote many books in both languages, *Pāḷi* and Myanmar. He mentioned his scholarly works in the conclusion of *Āṇkuraṭṭikā*.

The scholarly works are as follow;

1. *Atulaṭṭikāpāḷi*: post-commentary on *Aṭṭhasālinītaṭṭhakathā*
2. *Vinayabuddhiṭṭikāpāḷi*: post-commentary on *Kaṇkhāvitaraṇāṭṭhakathā*
3. *Saddatṭhabhedacintāmahāṭṭikāpāḷi*: Commentary on *Saddatṭhabhedacintā*
4. *Atthanīṭṭipāḷi*: grammatical work,
5. *Kavivīyapāḷi*: grammatical work and
6. *Saddabherīpāḷi*: grammatical work.
7. *Kavicandra*:
8. *Candālaṅkāra*:
9. *Maṅgalākyawkhaung* poem and
10. Its answer (*Maṅgalākyawkhang* poem's answer)

¹⁸ CSCD, **Cittayamaka** (*cittassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe tesam cittam uppannam, no ca tesam cittam uppajjamānam. cittassa uppāḍakkhaṇe tesam cittam uppannañceva uppajjamānañca*)

He mentioned his wish in conclusion that:

*Yathāyaṃ bhayābhāvena anāyāsena niṭṭhitā.
Tathā niṭṭhentu. Saṅkappā pāṇīnaṃ suṭṭhusundarā.
Iminā metteyyakāle tikkhagambhīraññāṇavā.
Rahāgutvā susodheyyaṃ sāsanaṃalakāṇḍakanti.*

As this text was accomplished without dangerous and trouble, likewise, may right ambition of all beings be accomplished.

By the power of this merit, May I be able to purify or uproot the thorn of impurity of Sāsana in time of Metteyya Buddha, having being been Arahan who endow with sharp and profound wisdom.¹⁹

PARAMATTHAVISODHANĪ-ṬĪKĀ THIT PĀḲĪ

The *Paramatthavisodhanī-ṭīkā Thit PāḲī* is a new *PāḲī* text, written by *Dhammāruṃ Sayadaw U Dīpamālā*, living in Chaung Oo Township, Sagain, at Saka era 1271 (1909 CE), printed at *Sāsanālaṅkāra Pitakat Press House*, Yangon, revised by PāḲī Scholar Saya Tin. It contains 146 pages. Though the name of the author is shown as “*U Dīpamālā*” on the book cover the author’s name is shown as “*Dīpālāṅkārathera*”.

This text focused on the points criticized by the *Dīpanī* and defends and supports the notions of Vibhānī. The author mentioned the text’s position thus:

*Idaṅcame paramatthavisodhanippakaraṇaṃ paramatthadīpaniyaṃ
āgataviruddhavādaṃ visodhessati. Imasmiṃ pana pakaraṇe maṇisāramaṇjūsā
sukhuccāraṇatthaṃ vitthāraṭṭikāti dattḥabbāti.*

This *Paramatthavisodhani* text will defend the points criticized (by *Ledi Sayadaw*) in the *Paramatthadīpanī*. In this text, *Maṇisāramaṇjūsā-ṭīkā* should be known as “*Vitthāraṭṭikā*” for the sake of easy-saying.²⁰

*Dīpālāṅkāratherena gaṇavācakahūtena
Disāsu āgatānampi sissānaṃ pariyattinca.
Divasaṃ vācakaṃ kāvā antarantarakālaṃva*

¹⁹ Author’s translation (No English translation is available).

²⁰ Author’s translation (No English translation is available).

Vihitā vaṇṇanāsāyaṃ paramtthavisodadhanī.

Anāyāsena niṭṭhāva sattānampi tathevetē

Susaṅkappā nisesena niṭṭhāpentu sadākālaṃ.

As The *Paramatthavisodhanī*, by Dīpaṅkarathera, teacher who teaches pupils coming from different direction, having taught daytime, compiling on the time between, completed without dangerous, likewise good thoughts of beings may come to complete forever without lacking anything.²¹

ABHIDHAMMATTHA-ANUVIBHĀVINĪ

Abhidhammattha-Anuvibhāvinī is a Pāli text, written by Sayadaw Sāgarābhīdhaja, living in Pubbārāma monastery, Bagu village, Khayan township, at Saka Era 1272, 1910 CE. Though a complete text was written, first two chapters became printed book at *Sāsanālankāra Pitakat* Press House, Yangon and the rest still remain as unprinted book. The text is exegesis of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭīkā* and obviously stands against the *Paramatthadīpanī* and supports the notion of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭīkā*.

Vibhāvanissa bhūtatthaṃ racitā nadīpanī

Pahāya yātigambhīraṃ micchāñāṇena ācitā

Appassute hyanekehi avassantehi thomitā

Taṃ taṃ gantvāna viññūnaṃ dassanattāya sādhukaṃ

*Uddharitvāna tassatthaṃ micchāsallaṃ mahāmuhaṃ Samāsato pavakkhāmi
bhāvanīyassa vaṇṇanaṃ. (Nidāna)*

Rejecting profound and accurate meaning of *Vibhāvinī*, new *Dīpanī* is written with the knowledge that is wrongly accumulated, and it is praised by many with little and impractical knowledge.

Having removed its meaning which is spike of untruth and huge delusion, I will write a commentary on *Vibhāvinī* in brief righteously taking citation of the related texts so that the wise men could read.²²

²¹ Author's translation (No English translation is available).

²² Author's translation (No English translation is available).

ATRISUNDARAṂKYAM

Atisundaraṁkyam is Myanmar text, written by U Nat Thar, living in Yangon, printed at *Sāsanālaṅkāra Pīṭakā* Press House, 1910 CE. It contains 403 pages but not includes the last chapter, *Kammaṭṭhānapariccheda*. The text was written with the purpose of standing against with *Paramatthadīpanī* and supports the notion of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭīkā*. U Nat Thar, is a pen name and he is an ex-monk, his name in the Monkhood is *U Nāginda*, and given name is U Tun Aye. The author apparently attacks the *Dīpanī*. The name of the text “*Atisundara*” is given an opposite usage of what the *Dīpanī* frequently use in the text “*taṁ na sundaraṁ*”. It means that whatever the *Dīpanī* said is not good, is actually very good. The author wrote another book “*Ukkaṁvaṁsa Jāgariya Kyam*” which abuses Ledī Sayadaw without connecting any points in the *Dīpanī*.

ABHIDHAMMATTHAVIHĀVINĪ-YOJANĀ

This *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-yojanā* is a Pāli text, written by *Sayadaw Ashin Nānindāsabha*, living in *Hmankyawng*, *Shwekyin* temple, Bahan township, Yangon, at Saka era 1281 (1919 CE), printed at *Pyigyimandain Press House*, Yangon, revised by *Ashin Ādiccavaṁsa*, Senior disciple of the author. It contains 774 pages. The word “*yojanā*” means “paraphrases”. Therefore this text is a paraphrase of the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭīkā*. The printed book is well arranged by his disciple. There are two parts on every page of the texts, the above is the text of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭīkā* and the beneath is the text of *Yojanā* which is the definition of above the texts.

Ashin Setṭhila, another senior disciple of author wrote an introduction to the *Yojanā* in Pāli which takes seven pages. He mentioned “*pakaraṇanidāna*” as the cause of the text. The author was requested not only by many disciples but also by a respected monk, the abbot of *Mahādhammādīpikārāma* monastery in Yangon, to write new post-commentary on the *Vibhāvinī* because the *Vibhāvinī* is very useful and its key text, the *Maṇisāramañjūsā* is extensive. The abbot advised the author to write *Yojanā* with two purposes, to explain the nature of *Abhidhamma* and to show the nature of Pāli composition. Then there was extensive controversy about the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā* in Myanmar. The author concluded the text by two verses thus:

Hitāvatābhidhammattha saṅgahassatthavaṇṇanā.

Esā vibhāvinīṭṭikā yāva tiṭṭhati sāsane.

Ñānābhivuddiyā ṭhātu tāvāyaṃ atthayojanā.

Pakāsentīva sārattṭhaṃ sārāsāravivekināṃ.

As long as this *Vibhāvinīṭṭikā*, the commentary on the *Saṅgaha* which is a cause of the benefits, exists in the *Sāsana*,

To then, this exegesis of the text which seems to show the essential for those who investigate essential and non-essential things, may exit for development of the knowledge.

Ashin Ādiccavaṃsa, editor of the text, wrote ten verses as compiler's remarks which are saying that the text is arranged systematically and was examined by senior learned monks.²³

In later life, the author disrobed and was famous as an ex-monk scholar in Myanmar.

ANUDĪPANĪ

The *Anudīpanī* was written by *Ledi Sayadaw*, Moneywar, 1920 CE, printed at *Haṃsāvati* Press House, Mandalay, and contains 324 pages. *Pathamakyaw U Ṇāṇa*, the author's senior disciple wrote the introduction in *Pāli*, saying the *Anudīpanī* came to appear as a key text of the *Dīpanī* because after the *Dīpanī* had been printed, it was getting famous quickly, not only local but also overseas, such as Sri Lanka, Landon etc. *Ledi Sayadaw* thought that the *Dīpanī* will not be difficult for Myanmar students as there was *Nissaya* for his senior disciple, but for foreigners the *Nissaya* could not help them. Therefore, *Ledi Sayadaw* wrote a key text of the *Dīpanī*:

Paramatthadīpanīnāma yena therena sā katā

Teneve sā kata hoti ayaṃ tassānudīpanī.

Aṭṭhasattadvayekamhi sake sā jeṭṭhamāsake

Kāle navamiyaṃ diva majjhanhike niṭṭhaṃ gatā. (nigamana)

²³ Author's translation (No English translation is available).

The *Thera* himself, by whom the *Paramatthadīpanī* was created, had created it's a key text, this *Anudīpanī*. It came to complete at afternoon on 9th over full moon day of month “*Nayun*”, (approximately June-July), Saka Era 1278. (1916AD).²⁴

MING KHING ṬĪKĀKYAW-GAṆṬHI-THIT

Ming Khing Ṭīkākyaw-Gaṇṭhi-Thit is a Myanmar commentary text, written by Second *Ming Khing Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicārinda*, living in Mong Ywa town, but while compiling this text, he was in Sagain pursuing seclusion, printed at Saka Era 1282 (1920 CE) at *Paññāsippaṃ Pitakat* Press House. It was revised by *Pāḷi* Scholar Sayar U Boe Thwe. The author explains a detailed meaning of the *Vibhāvinī* in Myanmar language. This work stands against the *Dīpanī* and supports the notion of the *Vibhāvinī*. He analyzes all the points from both *ṭīkāś*, numbering each point exactly.

The author said that there are wrong points in both *ṭīkāś* but very few in the *Vibhāvinī* and more in the *Dīpanī*. The eighteen points are wrong in the *Vibhāvinī*. Among that, nine points are caused by careless-writing and nine points are cause by wrong-notion as the *Dīpanī* accused. The three hundred and twenty-five points are wrong in the *Dīpanī*. Among those, ninety-seven points are cause by careless-writing and two hundred and twenty-eight points are cause by wrong-notion.

According to the author's conclusion, the *Dīpanī*'s accusation points are two hundred and forty-six. Out of them, only eighteen points are wrong as its accusation and the other two hundred and twenty-eight points are not wrong but wrong-accusation and the *Dīpanī* itself has ninety-seven careless-writing points. Therefore, three hundred and twenty-five points are in the *Dīpanī* which were badly done by *Ledī sayādaw*.

The author wrote these points sentence by sentence in Myanmar as follow:

In the *Vibhāvinī*, nine careless-writing points are found.

In the *Dīpanī*, however, ninety-seven careless-writing points are found.

In that *Dīpanī*, among accusation points to the *Vibhāvinī*, 46th, 47th, 58th, 59th, 73th, 145th, 146th, 147th, these nine points seem to be right-accusation.

²⁴ Author's translation (No English translation is available).

The rest 228 points in the *Dīpanī*, which are marked with number, two hundred twenty-eight points are merely badly wrong-accusations.

Therefore, ninety-seven careless-writing points and two hundred and twenty-eight wrong-accusation points are in the *Dīpanī*.²⁵

MAHĀATULA-ṬĪKĀ

The *Mahāatulaṭīkā* is a *Pāli* text, written by Sayadaw Nāgindasāmithera, living in Moenyo township, *Sāyāvatī* district, at Saka Era 1286 (1924 CE) printed at Sāsanaṭaṅkāra Pitakat Press House, Yangon, revised by *Pālī* Scholar Saya Phayay and contains 598 pages. The text stands against the *Dīpanī* and supports the notion of the Vibhāvinī.

It mentioned the nature of the text and affiliated text in the conclusion thus:

Mahāatulaṭīkācāti paramatthadīpaniyaṃ āgataviruddavādaṃ tattha tattha samabhāvaṃ dissanato sāravinicchayehi visodhitaṃ katvā racitā nāgindasāmi mahātherena racitā mahāatulaṭīkāca. Paramatthavisodhanīti tathā sabbākārena visodhitaṃ katvā vihitā dīpamālā mahātherena racitā paramatthavisodhanīṭīkā ca daṭṭhabbā. (nigamana)

The Mahāatulaṭīkā is that which is created by Nāgindamahāthera having removed the false notion of Paramatthadīpanī by the essential judgment due to seeing fitness with specific texts. The Paramatthavisodhanī is known as that which is created by Dīpamālāthera, having removed by all means like the previous text.²⁶

DECREE-ṬĪKĀ

The Decree-ṭīkā is a *Pāli* commentary, written by Sayadaw U Sāsana, living in Sainkhaung monastery, Pinn Township, printed at Yatanasiddhi Pīṭaka Press House 1934 CE, 500 copies were compiled by *U Ghosita*. It contains 149 pages and word correction as appendix. The author was a learned monk and had many followers in his time. At the present, the Pinn Township is a remote village and the monastery is also quiet and unknown.

²⁵Ming Khing Sayadaw, **Bhaddanta Vicārinda**, (Yangon, Myanmar: Paññāsippaṃ Pitakat press, 1920), p. 440.

²⁶ Author's translation (No English translation is available).

The author's profile is not obvious and no other scholarly works remain. Only the Decree *Ṭikā* might be considered as a masterpiece of this author. The Decree-*ṭikā* is a *Pāḷi* text, however an introduction is written in two languages, Myanmar and *Pāḷi*.

The author says that ordinary students could not assume whose description was to be counted as legitimate and authoritative. The author of the Decree-*ṭikā* was requested by his disciple to make judgment in the contention. Therefore, the author wrote this text by the name of *Vivādādhikaraṇavinicchayatīkā* or the Decree-*ṭikā*.

He mentioned his purpose of writing the text in *Pāḷi* verse thus;

*Tesaṃ taṃ vivadantānaṃ samathāyādhikaraṇaṃ
Navassānāgatatthañ ca karissāmi vinicchayaṃ*

I am going to write a judgment in order to settle the dispute of those who are quarreling and in order to prevent the appearance of a new argumentative person in the future.²⁷

In the texts, the author indicates controversy points by number. There are totally 263 points in the Decree *Ṭikā* on which he made a decision. For example, *Tasmā catuttho va jeyatu tass'eva santakaṃ hotu. Dutiyapañcamā parājentu ti*, therefore let the fourth conquer, the fact belongs to the fourth. Let the second and the fifth be defeated. *Tasmā sabbesaṃ pi jayyaparājayo n'atthi. Sabbe samasamā hontū ti*: therefore, there is neither conqueror nor loser. They are equal.

CONCLUSION

This paper has introduced the Abhidhamma debate and related texts in Myanmar. This article is just an introduction of the important event of the debate and the texts. Those who wish to know more have to go deeper and deeper and learn themselves.

On the other hand, it shows the way to a huge treasure house situated in a certain place by which any gold-miner can reach. Anyone who wishes to have a treasure has to go and dig himself. In a way, this paper has provided some parts of a very huge amount of *Abhidhamma* literature and their controversy points. This paper hopes that readers have gotten some valuable information which initiates them to do further research in Buddhist

²⁷ Author's translation (No English translation is available).

Studies. Indeed, the controversial points are manifold and most of them have not reached a final or satisfactory conclusion yet. The related texts are still in Myanmar script and most of the texts are not translated into Roman script yet. The majority of the texts are yet to be translated into English or even into Myanmar. These valuable literatures have been waiting for researcher since they came into existence. The readers are welcome to dig and enjoy the treasure of *Abhidhamma* literatures.

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MAHACHULA-ACADEMICS: PROACTIVE PROPAGATION OF BUDDHISM AT KHON KAEN CAMPUS



Dr. Niraj Ruangsang

ABSTRACT

This paper claims that ‘Mahachula-academics always support the propagation of Buddhism’. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Khon Kaen Campus has its vision to be ‘the International Buddhist University for Mental and Social Development’. Besides the academic development, the essential means used in the mental and social development is the effective dissemination of Buddhist teaching. To reach the set goal of the campus, the model of the network building for the Buddhist proactive propagation is created and operated in collaboration with other organizations and educational institutes. This paper discusses the model of network building for the Buddhist proactive propagation of Khon Kaen Campus based on the research of the Deputy Rector of the campus, Phra Sophonphatthanapundit (Assoc. Dr.), conducted in 2016. In so doing, it will first provide some of background of the topic: the dissemination of Buddhism in Thailand, network building of the main campus, proactive propagation of Buddhism in the northeast; and then it will provide some perspectives on the propagation of Buddhism based on the model.

Keywords: network creation, model of Buddhism’s proactive dissemination

INTRODUCTION

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University stipulates the organization of education and propagation of Buddhism as its primary mission by establishing both national and international networks. Following the main campus philosophy, Khon Kaen Campus has its vision to be ‘the International Buddhist University for Mental and Social Development’ and also to spread Buddhism in the northeast of the country. To reach such specified goal of the campus, the model of the network building for the Buddhist proactive propagation is created by the Deputy Rector of Khon Kaen Campus, Phra Sophonphatthanapundit (Assoc. Prof. Dr.) and operated in the collaboration of the other organizations and educational institutes. The outputs of the model application rely on outstanding betterment of the religious dissemination in the region. Of course, the model is not simply created as it requires the intensive governmental and academic experiences of the deputy rector as well as the well support from his subordinates. It is very interesting how the model is developed and implemented in order to promote Buddhism within the region. The key of success in applying the model is the network building and cooperation of the network institutions. This paper discusses the model of network building for the Buddhist proactive propagation of Khon Kaen Campus based on the research, conducted in 2016, with 2,005 study samples. In so doing, it will first provide some of background of the topic: dissemination of Buddhism in Thailand, network building of the main campus, proactive propagation of Buddhism in the northeast; and it will then provide some perspectives on the propagation of Buddhism based on the model.

BUDDHIST DISSERMINATION IN THAILAND

The dissemination of Buddhism has its root in the time of the Pāli Canon where the Buddha ordered sixty Arahant disciples to propagate the religion.

Wander, o *bhikkhus*, on a wandering for the benefit of many folk, for the happiness of many folk, out of sympathy for the world, for the welfare, for the benefit, for the happiness of angels and mankind. Do not the two of you go as one. Declare, o *bhikkhus*, the dhamma, beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, beautiful

in the end, both in meaning and in letter; announce the fully and totally complete and pure holy life.¹

After the passing away of the Lord, his religious heirs have continued the propagation of the religion in many parts of the world. During the 5th to 13th centuries, Southeast Asian empires were influenced directly from India, following Mahayana Buddhism and according to the Chinese pilgrim Yijing, who noted in his travels, all major sects of Indian Buddhism flourished in these areas.² After the decline of Buddhism in India, missions of Sinhalese monks gradually converted the Mon people and the Pyu city-states from Ari Buddhism to Theravāda and over the next two centuries also brought Theravāda Buddhism to the Bamar people, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia where it supplanted previous forms of Buddhism.³ Since then, Theravāda has become the dominant sect in Thailand.

Today, it is undeniable that there is a close relationship between Buddhism and the Thai people. The majority of Thai people apply teachings of the Buddha as a guideline in their daily lives. Also, Buddhism influences the Thai society in many areas such as social and cultural studies, social work, economy, and even politics. Buddhism and Thai people therefore are bound in a relationship like ‘an unbroken network’.⁴ The root of the prosperity of Buddhism in Thailand is the existence of the Sangha governmental organizations, which has continued the propagation of Buddhism for a long time. The Sangha in Thailand plays an important role in spreading the religion in three main aspects: dissemination of Buddhism to the communities in the form of the Dhammadūta (religious propagators) mission, using modern information technology and accessible language based on knowledge or research; dissemination of Buddhism to the communities by means of educational welfare allowing the temples or

¹*‘Caratha bhikkhave cārikam bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānam. Mā ekena dve agamittha, desetha bhikkhave Dhammam, ādikalyāṇam majjhekalyāṇam pariyoṣānakalyāṇam, sāttham sabyañjanam; kevalaparipuṇṇam parisuddham brahmacariyam pakāsetha’*. Vi.M., (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Press, 2006), p.40.

²Bhikkhu Sujato, **Sects & Sectarianism: The Origin of Buddhist Schools**, (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Education Foundaton, 2007), p. 72.

³Richard F. Gombrich, **Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Banares to Modern Colombo**. (London: Routledge, 2006), p.3.

⁴Phra Sophonphatthanapundit, “**Model of Network Building for the Buddhist Proactive Propagation of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University at Khon Kaen Campus**”. (paper presented at the The 3th National and the 1st International Conference: Integration of Buddhism with Research to develop a Sustainable Society, Khon Kaen, Thailand, 30 March 2016 2016), p.395.

religious facilities as learning centers for people at all levels of society, providing further education beyond the official education system of Thailand; promoting public health by using the temples and religious facilities as vocational centers for the community such as hospitals, health care stations, residential places, convalescent homes and vocational workshops.⁵ From above, it is said that the propagation of Buddhism involves social assistance, social service, education and management. The propagators today do not only require Buddhist knowledge but also service, academic and administrative skills. Mahachula Buddhist University seems to be the only training center to utilize these religious propagation skills.

MAHACHULA BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY: NETWORK BUILDING

In 1887 (2430), His Majesty King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V) established the first Sangha college in Thailand ‘Mahadhatu Witthayalai’, which was in Wat Mahadhatu, Bangkok. It was intended to be an institute where monks, novices and laity come to study the Buddhist doctrines and higher education. On 13th September 1896 (2439), the college was given a new status and name in relation to His Majesty King Chulalongkorn as ‘Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University’.⁶ An essential progress was made in 1997 (2540), where the Thai Parliament passed the Act, recognizing the university as a legal entity and the university under the government supervision.⁷ Since then, its educational management has expanded all over the country. Thousands of both home and oversea students registered to study. Operated by hundreds of staff members, the university now has 11 campuses, 16 Sangha colleges, 3 Extended Classrooms, 14 Academic Service Units, 1 Domestic Affiliated Institute and 5 International Affiliated Institutes.⁸ Currently, the university is offering the postgraduate education in 11 programs under the supervision of the Graduate School; the bachelor programs are under the management of the four faculties: Buddhism, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences. For social service, the university has academic service units to operate the Abhidhammajotika College, Buddhist Sunday School, Buddhist Research Institute, Vipassana Meditation Institute, Language Institute and ASEAN Studies Centre.⁹

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, p.8.

⁸*Ibid.*, p.10.

⁹*Ibid.*

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University stipulates the organization of education and Buddhist propagation as its primary mission by establishing both national and international networks through the activities it organizes such as the Vesak Celebration Ceremony in Thailand together with the participation of attendees from over 80 countries.¹⁰ Most of the university's missions at the organizational level relate to academic collaboration with its external networks. For instance, the International Seminar on 'Buddhist Dhamma and Development of Society and Economy' was organized by the university together with the participation of 85 countries. Also, a number of activities such as Project of Dhamma Teaching in Schools, International Dhammadūta Propagators, and International Conferences are organized with the same purpose. Besides the regular education management of the university, one of the most important activities is 'Morality Training for the Public' sponsored by the Ministry of Education in the fiscal year 2008. In order to achieve the goal determined, the university has approached many agencies and networks to ask for their collaboration such as Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Office of National Buddhism and the Sangha in Area 14.¹¹

The university's model for the creation and maintenance of external and internal networks depends on the cooperation of many people both inside and outside of the university. It is operated by integration between Buddhism and modern sciences as a corpus for connecting people, organizations and parties. The most advantageous point of MCU is that the institute was established at the initiation of King Rama V as a Buddhist University. Besides its reputation in education management for the Mahanikāya Sangha Buddhist tradition, the university has been honored domestically and internationally for its devotion to Buddhist teaching preservation. The international mission is organized in accordance with the vision of Phra Brahmapundit (Prof. Dr.), Rector of the university who said that 'International-hood appeared through organizing the Vesak Ceremony as the world important day, the university is assigned by the government to organize the conference, leading to the agreement for establishing Thailand as the centre of Buddhism'.¹² The effective education management of

¹⁰ International Council for Day of Vesak, **"Program: The 13th United Nations for Day of Vesak Celebrations,"** (Thailand: The Royal Government of Thailand, 2016), pp.5-122.

¹¹ Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, **Development Plan of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Higher Education, Version 11 (2012 -2016).** (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Press, 2549), p.150.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.151.

the university leads to the increasing size of its network. The university has also gained trust among the networks for constantly organizing many international projects.

KHON KEAN CAMPUS: NETWORK BUILDING MODEL OF PROACTIVE BUDDHIST PROPAGATION

Following the main campus, Khon Kaen Campus approaches the propagation of Buddhism with a mission to create a network within and outside the country by organizing Buddhist activities with the participation of institutions such as educational institutes, government and private sector agencies, the public, and the Sangha working in local, national and regional areas. This leads to the acquirement of a model of network creation and proactive propagation of Buddhism in the northeast of Thailand. In other words, this creates a domestic and international institutional collaboration, makes possible the establishment of a network inside and outside of the country, and creates a clearer practical guideline and means of participation in the proactive dissemination of Buddhism. In Khon Kaen Campus, the network of proactive dissemination is built in two levels: 1) Domestic Level: the network within the country divided into three levels (local, provincial, and national); 2) International Level: the network at the regional level which was a connection between countries in the Indochina region such as Laos, Vietnam and China.

DOMESTIC NETWORK

According to the mission of MCU, to organize Buddhist education together with the dissemination of Buddhism to all regions of Thailand, MUC KK, as one campus of the mother university, critically attempts to increase the effectiveness of Buddhism dissemination by stipulating the vision of creating networks to seek the collaboration of various related agencies inside the I-San region. The university joins hands with the Sangha in Area 9, official agencies, educational institutes, local administrative organizations in Khon Kaen and surrounding provinces to proactively spread Buddhism.

The model of network building for MCU KK's proactive propagation of Buddhism was carried out through participation of other institutes (mainly classified into three groups: educational institutes; public, government and private sector organizations; Sangha network) and the general public through the activities of the campus. Integrated with the strategies of the university, the university organized projects and activities such as the projects of 'Tipitaka

Study', 'Buddhist Idol Development' and 'Seminars on Local Wisdom', in collaboration with educational institutes such as police, military, faculty of teachers, and local residents. The empirical results of these can be seen in the increasing number of Buddhist monks and laypersons coming to visit and study at the campus and eventually the campus is well-known in the community. And, now a number of important government and private sector units surrounding the campus participated in the campus' activities more and more. This clearly indicates that the model of proactive propagation of Buddhism is effective and gradually shows its successful outcomes.

The model of network creation through a group of Sangha networks was brought about by organizing Buddhist activities or ceremonies with the collaboration of the Sangha in different areas. The university together with the Office of Morality and Ethics and Stability Promotion of Nation, Religion and Monarch organized the project to celebrate 2600 years of the Buddha's enlightenment. There were many activities in this ceremony such as 'Sīlācāri-Sīlācārīnā Ordination', 'Tipiṭaka Recitation', 'Enlightened Wisdom of the Buddha Exhibition', 'Buddha and Arahant Relics Exhibition', and 'Triple Gem Virtue Walking'. The organized projects are consistent with the university strategy to promote Buddhism, art and cultures as mentioned in Strategy 01: to support students and personnel in organizing activities to promote Buddhism and conserve art and cultures, and Strategy 02: to develop the campus as a national and international learning resource of Buddhism and other cultures.

INTERNATION NETWORK

Building the network of Buddhist propagation in the Indochina region is one of the primary missions of Khon Kaen Campus. It is the international network building in a region which has had the same cultural and social basis. The university has established the network centre of Buddhist learning in the Indochina region at Thatsrikhotbong Temple, Thakheak City, Khummuan State, Laos. The most tangible outcome of this can be seen in the increasing number of the students from Laos, Cambodia and other countries coming to study at the campus. Through organizing the international conference, the campus gains collaboration from international governmental organizations such as the Consulates of China, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Furthermore, the campus is now working on its first international journal 'Journal of Buddhist Education and Research, JBER' joined by the scholars from USA, Australia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Singapore, China, India, and Sri Lanka. This is also the result from building the international network based on the model. The international journal can

be used as a medium of dissemination of Buddhism in the form of academic activities as they allow the scholars to exchange knowledge and give an opportunity for those who are interested in learning the academic Buddhist knowledge.

DISCUSSION

Created by the Deputy Rector of Khon Kaen Campus, the model of networking building for proactive propagation of Buddhism of Khon Kaen Campus is effective in terms of implementation within the region. The model is clearly developed from the network building of the main campus and is adjusted to suite the working contexts. For the domestic network relationship maintenance, there does not seem to be a major issue for the campus as all network institutions uses Thai as the official language to communicate. This is simple to create understanding between the institutes. Yet, for the international one, the campus needs more personnel with capacity in languages. This leads to the establishment of Language Institute of Khon Kaen Campus at the beginning of this year, 2017. Following the main campus, Khon Kaen Campus also issues the notice of English proficiency for the staff and organizes English training for all the personnel. This could be the best way to get all the campus staff ready to maintain the international network in the future. Moreover, to deal with risk management, highly qualified personnel with high English proficiency are recruited to support the mission. Even though the foreign language development for the personnel of the campus is an academic matter, it is a very intrinsic operation which could support the propagation of Buddhism in the region. The model application is truly consistent with the main mission of the main campus and could be the prototype for dissemination of Buddhism in other regions as well. So, it is the primary mission of Buddhist University to improve the quality of both academic matters and staff simultaneously to serve its unique mission which is ‘the educational development and propagation of Buddhism’. From the above discussion, this can definitely be said ‘*Mahachula-academics always support the propagation of Buddhism*’.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the international mission of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is expanding rapidly in many parts of the country under the leadership of the Rector, Phra Brahmapundit (Prof. Dr.) to meet the vision of being ‘the International Buddhist University for mental and social development’. This truly benefits the spread of the Buddha teachings inside and outside of the country. As the branch in the northeast of the country, Khon Kaen

Campus now is developing its personnel to be prepared for this mission. The model of network building for the propagation of Buddhism at Khon Kaen Campus is being implemented to expand its networks and to propagate the religion in the assigned areas. The most empirical result this mission wishes to accomplish is ‘*to prolong existence and prosperity of Buddhism within the region*’. Wherever, there are the religious heirs, teachings, and followers Buddhism will definitely exist on earth. ‘*Mahachula-academics*’ are truly the key for this.

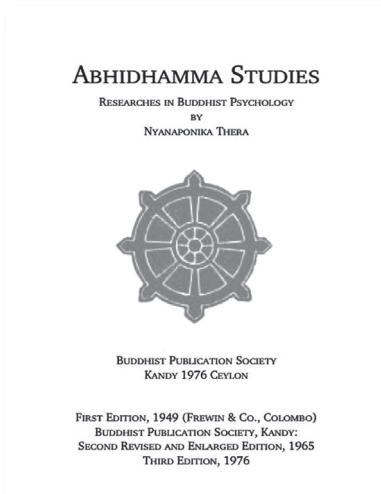
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ABHIDHAMMA STUDIES RESEARCH IN BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY



Seth Evans



by

Nyanaponika Thera
Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society,
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\$9.95.

Abhidhamma Studies by Ven. Nyanaponika Thera is a venturesome take on the Dhammasaṅgī and the Aṭṭhasālinī, the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭika and its commentary.

Chapter one gives a brief history of the Abhidhamma and its importance in Buddhist tradition. This is a good introduction as it also clarifies its purpose and addresses terminology. The best part of this chapter is where Nyanaponika Thera addresses the importance of meditation when studying the Abhidhamma as the perspective gained through concentration leads to the experiential insight

that the Abhidhamma is attempting to describe.

Chapters two, three and four go into the actual classification and explanation of the contents of the Dhammasaṅgī. The descriptions are clear and concise keeping to the essence of the original Piṭaka. Nyanaponika Thera then goes on to enumerate and expand on several lists found in the Dhamma including the Bala, Indriya, Jhāna, Magga and more.

The fifth chapter, The Problem of Time, is a discourse on time according to the Abhidhamma method. Here, Nyanaponika Thera utilizes some western philosophy to convey his thoughts, particularly that of the analytics. A quote from the Dhammasaṅgī is used, “at that time there are Sense-Impressions” (164) to show a representation of:

“... the limitation of consciousness by time. Its description too is only possible by reference to time, namely, to the temporary simultaneity of the single factors. But on the other hand, these mental factors, in other words the internal relations, for their part, determine the time by furnishing the measure of the time-unit, which consists only in the duration of that temporary combination of factors” (164).

Ven. Nyanaponika Thera correlates this revelation that the momentary experience is time itself rather than time being an objective quality of reality that experiences rest upon with a quote from Bertrand Russell:

“We cannot give what may be called absolute dates, but only dates determined by event. We cannot point to a time itself, but only to some event occurring at that time” (165).

Ven. Nyanaponika Thera gives a detailed account of how the Dhammasaṅgī and the Aṭṭhasālinī deal with time going through the various meanings of samaya, “chronological time”, that are used in the text:

Concurrence
Condition
Moment
Aggregation

Ven. Nyanaponika Thera does a wonderful job in showing that these different meanings imply that time, as used in the Abhidhamma, did not mean the more conventional sense that we think of today.

Abhidhamma Studies: Research in Buddhist Psychology is a gallant piece of Buddhist Philosophy that should be read by anyone who is serious about the subject. Though it would be difficult to understand the subtleties of this book without prior knowledge of Buddhist Philosophy, it would serve as not only a great aid with the Abhidhamma, but as a standalone book to learn the theory of the Dhamma.

This is not an easy read by any means, and it requires scrupulous attention to understand. It will not be comprehended in one reading. That being said, Ven. Nyanaponika Thera does an excellent job of expressing very difficult subject matter in a concise and coherent way. This book offers one of the best gateways for readers to learn and grasp deep and profound teachings of the Buddha that are not usually explained in Western settings.