

A Study of The Phenomena of Action, Meditation and Liberation in Early Buddhism

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Abstract - To be is to act and to act is to be. Our being is very much constituted by the way we act and live. If one is stealing, then he is a thief. If one is teaching, he is a teacher. Buddhism upholds the view that our action determines what we are. Our suffering and the happiness are very much results of our actions. This doctrine seems to us a truism, a self-explanatory doctrine. We generally believe that good action results in happiness and bad action results in suffering. But this is not accepted by several thinkers at the time of Buddha. In the Sâmaññaphalasutta of Dîgh-nikâya there is a discussion of the view of MaEkhalîGoshalaka, who is a determinist (niyativâdî) and upholds the view that it is wrong to believe that good conduct will lead to our desired results. There is no cause of the purity or impurity of living beings. Good and Bad acts do not affect our destiny. Any living being is purified only by passing in the cycle of 84000 Mahâkalpath through the various forms of life. Buddha opposed such types of view and advocated the middle path. The middle path is the path of Noble Eightfold Path, namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. It is the path based on the truth that our destiny is determined by our good action or bad action.

Any action performed by us has two aspects inner and outer. The outer aspect is determined by our behavior and inner aspect by our good or bad thought or desire. Suppose we want to abuse someone but I am not abusing, because his bodily strength is superior to mine. Here outer aspect, the speech act is good but inner aspect is bad. This action, according to Buddhism, is not perfectly good because inner aspect is defective. A good action must be non-defective in inner as well as in outer forms. In order to perform such actions, a mental training is also necessary which is covered by Buddhist Way of meditation. A discussion of action will be incomplete without the discussion of the goal of action and life. Nibbâna is the goal of life. In order to cover all these points, we have made an effort, in the present thesis to study the phenomena of action, meditation and liberation.

Keywords: liberation, meditation.

Introduction - To be is to act and to act is to be. Our being is very much constituted by the way we act and live. If one is stealing, then he is a thief. If one is teaching, he is a teacher. Buddhism upholds the view that our action determines what we are. Our suffering and the happiness are very much results of our actions. This doctrine seems to us a truism, a self-explanatory doctrine. We generally believe that good action results in happiness and bad action results in suffering. But this is not accepted by several thinkers at the time of Buddha. In the Sâmaññaphalasutta of Dîgh-nikâya there is a discussion of the view of MaEkhalîGoshalaka, who is a determinist (niyativâdî) and upholds the view that it is wrong to believe that good conduct will lead to our desired results. There is no cause of the purity or impurity of living beings. Good and Bad acts do not affect our destiny. Any living being is purified only by passing in the cycle of 84,000 Mahâkalpa through the various forms of life. Buddha opposed such types of view

and advocated the middle path. Allan R. Bomhard, his working The life and teachings of the Buddha according to the oldest texts. Refers to the meaning of the middle path that "The middle path is the path of Noble Eightfold Path, namely right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. It is the path based on the truth that our destiny is determined by our good action or bad action". Every action performed by us has two internal and external aspects. The external aspect is determined by our behavior and the internal aspect by our good or bad thinking or desire. Suppose we want to abuse someone but I'm not abusing, because his body strength is greater than mine. Here, the external aspect, the vocal act is good, but the internal aspect is bad. This action, according to Buddhism, is not perfectly good because the internal aspect is defective. A good deed must be nondefective in internal and external forms. To perform such actions, mental training is also required and

is covered by the Buddhist form of meditation. An action discussion will be incomplete without action and discussion of life's goals. Nibbāna is the goal of life. To cover all these points, in this thesis we have made an effort to study the phenomena of action, meditation and liberation.

Chanchamnongsuwat, in his work *The Buddha's Core Teachings* content that Buddhism is known for the doctrine of Kamma. Buddhism takes Kamma (Pāli) or Karma (Sanskrit) as the cause of verities and operations pervading the world. The doctrine of Kamma is based on the doctrine of dependent origination. (Pratītya-samutpāda). It also governs the law of morality, which asserts that an intentional action will lead to a result proportionate in the nature and intensity to its intention. Right deeds are those which are based on skillful or wholesome (Kusala) actions and non-right deeds are those which are based on unskillful or unwholesome (Akusala) action. A skillful deed produces a result which is desirable, good, and happy while an unskillful deed brings about just the opposite. The word 'Kamma' or action is a neutral term represents the good deeds and bad deeds, if the good action is well known as 'a meritorious action' on the other hand if the bad action is called 'an evil action'. In Tripitaka, the Buddha has said that the action consists of intention only has called Kamma (ChetanāhaAbhikkhavekammaAvadāmi).

Review of literature:

Prof. Thinnaphan Nagata "Buddhism and Thai Society," book published in 1984 A.D

He wrote that the monk is respected by the people, because he gives suggestion and helps them solve their daily problems of rural community. The monk is highly respected because people believe that monk is a person who has spiritual understanding. Sometimes he has to be an engineer and he also has to do the work by himself. Therefore, monks always help and solve the problems of society. We have seen the value and necessity of two institutions namely, temple and monk.

PhraMethidhammaporn "Thai Monks Regulations B.E. 2505," book published in 1993 A.D.

The author writes that it is very necessary to make a plan of new reconstruction with the comprehensive interrelation of environmental development, ecological continuity and serene house complex. And its location is on both state and private land. This showed that the monk's role on these works had been considered by the King. On the maintenance work, precautions are essential which all the monks have to take to consideration. This is the most severe unawareness of the monk's role on their own responsibilities. And it might be called the National disaster.

Amarnath Thakur "Buddha and Buddhist Synods in India and Abroad," book published in 1996 A.D.

This book explains the various Buddhist synods which were held so far. An endeavor has been made to present, historically, all the aspects of each synod, its purpose, result and contribution to the cause of Buddhism. The first chapter

deals with the life of Buddha and throws light on the contemporary religious condition. In the next four chapters, the details of the four synods, held in India, are mentioned. The next three chapters contain the description of the councils held in Ceylon. The last 10 two chapters deal with the councils which took place in Thailand and Myanmar.

Research Objective:

1. To study the nature and types of action (kamma) in early Buddhism
2. To study the nature and types of meditation in early Buddhism
3. To study the nature and types of Nibbāna in early Buddhism

Research hypotheses: Everlasting peace in human society is very much needed today. Any type of progress either material or spiritual is not possible without peace. Some human beings are involved in bad actions, engaging fully in terrorist activities and threatening the world peace. Buddhist philosophy of Action, Meditation and Liberation may prepare an atmosphere for discouraging bad actions because bad actions are cause of bondage and suffering. Liberation is necessary not only for securing individual liberation from bondage and suffering but also for realizing world peace which is very much needed in our age.

Research methodology: We should try to present our view by reviewing following materials:

1. Information gathered from Tripitaka.
2. Information gathered from other Pāli texts like Visuddhimagga etc.
3. Information collected from writings, books, journals, articles of scholars of Buddhism.
4. Our own thesis presentation by reviewing digesting the above materials.

Scope of the Study: We believe that the scope of the study is very bright because there are many philosophies which are favoring the phenomena of bad actions. We are attempting in a humble way to deny such type of philosophies so that the importance of good actions can be realized for the progress and happiness of humanity. The scope of the study is co-terminus with happiness and peace of humanity.

Conclusion:

1. Actions done without intention are not considered as Kamma, because Kamma emphasizes on the motive or intention not on the deed itself.
2. The wholesome or unwholesome Kammās are performed through three channels (dvara) which are; the door of the body (kāya kamma), the door of the word (vacīkamma) and the door of the mind (manasikamma). Although kamma are done through manas, but they all manifest through these three doors.
3. Kamma determines the nature of the new birth and the circumstances in which it takes place; that is, it determines rebirth, as well as the plans of existence

- for birth to take place.
4. The four bases of awareness concern NīvaraGa, khandhā, āyatana and saccā.
 5. Everyone has the opportunity to realize the ultimate truth of nature and progress towards the wisdom and purification of the mind in current life.
 6. It is shown that the development of vision (vipassanā) based on the four foundations of awareness taught by the Buddha is the primary way to help everyone achieve the ultimate goal of Buddhism.
 7. Nibbāna is a state beyond space (position) and time (duration), beyond the scope of language and empirical determinations. It is the end of Kamma and rebirth, the cessation of suffering, the end of the process of becoming (saAsāra). Nibbāna is positively conceived as the declaration of eternal peace and highest happiness.
 8. There are four kinds of development, namely, (i)

physical development (kāya-bhāvanā), (ii) moral development (sīla-bhāvanā), (iii) emotional development (citta-bhāvanā) and (iv) intellectual development (paññā-bhāvanā).

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