

**Ministry of Education
Department of Higher Education
Yangon University of Distance Education**

**Yangon University of
Distance Education
Research Journal**

Vol. 10, No. 1

December, 2019

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Arāḍa's Teaching from the Buddhacarita

Pa Pa Aung

Abstract

In Buddhist Literature it is an admitted that the *Bodhisattva* had sought a way of salvation under a great teacher named Hermit *Arāḍa*. But there are no statements about the *Arāḍa's* beliefs and methods of salvation in detail. For the first time, this *Arāḍa's* system of salvation explained in the *Buddhacarita Mahākāvya*. The famous poem, *Buddhacarita* belongs to a class of "*Buddhavaṃsa*" Literature which deals with the biography of the Buddha. The twelfth chapter of *Buddhacarita* is "*Arāḍa's Darśana*". In this chapter, we can find the teachings of *Arāḍa* concerning with *Sāṃkhya* system and Buddhist Philosophy. *Sāṃkhya* system is an orthodox (*āstika*) and Buddhist Philosophy is heterodox (*nāstika*) in Indian Philosophy. This paper attempts to point out *Sāṃkhya Darśana* and Buddhist Philosophy, and mentions some remarkable points of similarity in both.

Keywords: *Buddhacarita*, *Bodhisattva*, *Sāṃkhya Darśana*, Buddhist Philosophy

Introduction

According to the *Theravāda* and *Mahayāna* Buddhist Literatures, Prince *Siddhartha* went to the two great teachers *Arāḍa* or *Aḷārakālāma* and *Udraka* or *Udakarāmaputta* after renouncing the world. His aim is to get the Supreme Truth, *Nirvāna*. However, *Arāḍa's* methods of salvation and teaching are not mentioned in *Pāli* Canonical Literature. But *Buddhacarita*, the life of the *Buddha*, is an exception. We can find *Arāḍa's* teaching only in this book. *Siddhartha's* first acquaintance with *Arāḍa* and their conversation on the supreme Truth described by *Aśvaghōṣa* in the twelfth canto of *Buddhacarita*.

The *Buddhacarita* depicts the events of the life of the *Gautama Buddha* from the Holy Birth to *Mahāparinirvāna*. It is a famous *Mahākāvya* or *Sargabandha* in Sanskrit and a beautiful poem, in high poetic way for Buddhist devotees. The *Buddhacarita Mahākāvya* compose of 28 chapters in verses. Today, the original version of *Buddhacarita* has fourteen chapters only. *Aśvaghōṣa*, the author of the *Buddhacarita* was one of the leaders or founders of the doctrine of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. He was a contemporary of King *Kaniṣka* (circa 100 A.D.). The twelfth chapter of *Buddhacarita* entitles that "*Arāḍa's Darśana*" (The meeting with *Arāḍa*). The "*Darśana*" is used to describe a system of philosophy. The term "*Darśana*" derived from the root "*ḍṛś*" which means "to see" in Sanskrit- English Dictionary. It is used in philosophical term.¹ The seeing is either perceptual observation or conceptual knowledge or intuitive experience. It is inspection of facts, logical inquiry or insight of soul. Generally, *Darśana* means the seeing of truth. The twelfth chapter of *Buddhacarita* has 121 verses and the teaching of *Arāḍa* described in verse No. 16 to 67. In this chapter, we can find the teaching of *Arāḍa* that it is *Sāṃkhya* system which has just a philosophical or a mystical way in Indian Philosophy.

The *Arāḍa's* teaching from the *Buddhacarita* attempts to describe *Sāṃkhya Darśana* and Buddhist Philosophy, and some remarkable points of similarity in both systems through the analysis of a particular poem, the *Buddhacarita*. This paper aims at pointing out some interesting points of *Sāṃkhya* and Buddhist Philosophy.

The Teaching of *Arāḍa*

Sarvarthasiddha approached *Arāḍa* to have the means of stopping the rebirth and thereby putting an end to all sorts of pains and sufferings. *Arāḍa*, the seer of the *Kālāma* family welcomed *Bodhisattva* there with great honour and expressed his joy. Then he briefly explained the cause and effect of the cycle of existence and the method of salvation to *Bodhisattva*. He taught about "a being" that forms with primary matter (*prakṛti*), secondary matter (*vikāra*), birth (*janma*), death (*mṛtyur*) and old age (*jarā*). The five elements (*pañcabhūtā*), the ego-principle (*ahamkāra*), intellect (*buddhi*) and the unseen-power

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¹ A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 491.

(*avyaktaṃ*) are the Primary matter (*prakṛti*). Secondary matter means the objects of senses (*viṣayānimḍriyāṇi*), the senses (*buddhi*), the hands and feet (*pāṇipāda*), the voice (*vāda*), the organs of generation and excretion (*pāyūpastha*) and the mind (*manah*). The *ātman* which this system takes as conscious (*viññāna* or objects of senses) called the knower of the field. Awareness is intellection (*buddhi*). The seeing (*vyaktaṃ*) related to birth, growing old, and suffering from disease and death. And the unseen (*avyaktaṃ*) recognized by the contrary.

Next, *Arāḍa* explained the causes of the cycle of existence (*saṃsāra*). He told that wrong knowledge (*ajñāna*), the power of the act (*karma*) and desire (*trṣṇā*) were at the root of rebirth (mundane existence). The foolish individual person abides in these three items, so he does not pass beyond that “being” or bondage. The causes of these three were misunderstanding (*vipratyaya*), egoism (*ahaṃkāra*), confusion of thought (*saṃdeha*), wrong conjunction (*abhisamplavāt*), lack of discrimination (*aviśeṣa*), false means (*anupāya*), attachment (*saṃgādabhya*), and falling away (*pātata*).

Misunderstanding acts topsy-turvily. It does wrongly what has to be done. It thinks wrongly what it has to think. The wrong attribution of personality shows itself in this would thus, by thing “it is I who speak, I who know, I who go, I who stand”. The confusion of thought sees as one thing which is not mixed up together. Wrong conjunction means thinking that the ego is identical with this, namely mind, intellect and act and that this group is same with the ego. The lack of discrimination does not know the distinction between the intelligent and the unintelligent or between the primary constituents. Wrong means declared by *Arāḍa* are the use of the invocations names and *vaśaṭ*, the various kinds of ritual sprinkling, etc. Attachment recorded as that thought which the fool attached to the objects of sense by mind, voice, intellect and action. Falling way is to understand as wrong imagination about suffering that “this is mine”, “I belong to this”. Thereby a man is fall away in the cycle of transmigration.

Arāḍa says that a wise man declares ignorance of illusion (*avidyā*) to be associated with five factors: namely torpor (*tama*), delusion (*moha*), great delusion (*mahāmoha*) and the two kinds of darkness (*tāmisra*). Torpor is to indolence and delusion is to birth and death. Great delusion is to understand a passion. Because even mighty beings become delude over this passion, it records as great delusion. Darkness is anger and blind darkness is to despondency. This ignorance has the power to pass from birth to birth which means cycle of existence. By the power of ignorance, the being believes that he is a seer, a hearer, a thinker, and he hates the cycle of transmigration of soul. *Arāḍa* explained that when these causal condition does not come into “being”, the result does not come into “being”.

Then *Arāḍa* taught the *Bodhisattva* as his last goal and attainment. He concisely explained the *Brahman* - courses. These are as follows:

After first leaving his family and assuming the mendicant’s badges, takes on himself a rule of discipline which covers all proper behaviour. Then, displaying his mind by entire contentment with whatever he gets from whatever source, he favours a quite lonely dwelling. Then he is free from the pairs of worldly life, he studies the *Śāstra* delightfully. Then seeing the danger of passions and the supreme happiness of passionless, he arrests his senses. He exerts himself in the matter of mental quietude in his solitary life. The wise man can now win from the first trance to the fourth trance. If the fool immersed or dissociated in any one trance he would obtain the plains called the *Brahmā*, the *Ābhāsvara* deities or the *Śubhakṛtsna* deities or the *Brhatphala* deities respectively.

But the wise man sees the evils that exist for those who have body (*Rūpa*). He sets his mind on attaining further mental progress. Firstly he forms a mental conception of the empty spaces which exist on this body. Then he obtains a clear idea of space with regard to its solid matter also. He meditates on this transcendent matter. But another wise man tries to contract his self which has extended over space. He looks on that very thing as unlimited and finally he

reaches a higher stage. Another man who skilled in regard to the inner self, sees that there is nothing, he declared that is the realm of one for whom nothing exists. So the knower of the field has escaped from the body. This is supreme absolute without attributes or *Guṇas*, the highest *Arūpajñāna*, everlasting and immutable. All of the above teachings are the doctrine of *Arāḍa*.¹

***Sāṃkhya* Philosophy in *Arāḍa*'s Teaching**

According to the Indian philosophy, Buddhism is the heterodox (*nāstika*). The orthodox (*āstika*) belongs the six philosophical systems (popularly known as *ṣad-darśana*), namely, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vedānta*, *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika*.² The exposition of *Arāḍa* resembles the *Sāṃkhya* system from the *ṣad-darśana*.

As advocated by *Arāḍa*, the person who experiences the effects of *karma*, either good or bad, called 'the being' (*sattva*). This being is commonly consist primary matter, secondary matter, birth, death and old age.³ The latter three are properly the characteristics of the ephemeral aspect of the person which keep him in perpetual state of change. *Arāḍa* enumerated the basic principles into two parts as the Primary matter (*prakṛti*) and the Secondary matter (*vikāra*). According to the *Sāṃkhya* system, it admits two ultimate realities, namely, *prakṛti* - nature and *puruṣa* - spirit, are independent of each other in respect of their existence. But the two basic principles described in the *Sāṃkhyasaṅgraha* as the generative principles (*prakṛti*) and the generated principles (*vikāra*)⁴.

In *Arāḍa*'s the exposition, the 24 material *tattvas* (nature of things) can also seen in two groups, one of eight called *Prakṛti*, and one of sixteen derived from the first and called *Vikāra*.⁵ According to the *Sāṃkhyasaṅgraha*, the numbers of each principle are also enumerated that (There are) eight generative principles (*astau prakṛtayah*) and (There are) sixteen generated products (*sodaia vikārāḥ*).⁶

The early *Sāṃkhya* text used the word consciousness (*kṣetra*) instead of *puruṣa* (pure consciousness). According to the *Karmadīpikā*, consciousness called "*puruṣa*" because it is primeval, because it resides in the body, and because it is by nature of "fulfillment".⁷ In the *Arāḍa*'s *Darśana*, the seer also made reference to the *kṣetrajñā* or soul or spirit. The conscious (*kṣetra*) is called the knower of the field (*kṣetrajñā*) because it knows this field.⁸

The teachers of *Sāṃkhya* School can see in this chapter. *Arāḍa* said that *Kapila* and his pupils attained intellectual.⁹ Sage *Kapila* is traditionally credited as a founder of the *Sāṃkhya* School. At verse no.67, *Jaigīṣavya*, *Janaka*, *Parāśara* and other seers point out that they liberated by this path. In the *Mokṣadharmā*, portion of the *Mahābhārata*, various names of ancient teachers mentioned including *Kapila* and *Janaka*. *Kapila* is often referred to in the later technical philosophical literature as important precursor of *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy.

According to the Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, *Sāṃkhya Darśana* from the *Buddhacarita* is the Proto - *Sāṃkhya*, which was illustrated in the *Sāṃkhya* textual tradition.¹⁰

***Theravāda* Buddhist Philosophy in *Arāḍa*'s Teaching**

From the above teaching, *Sāṃkhya Darśana* generally is similar to the *Theravāda* Buddhist Philosophy.

¹ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:1-67, p.166-178.

² An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p.1-2.

³ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:17, p.167.

⁴ Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Sankhya, p.319.

⁵ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:18-19, p.168.

⁶ Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Sankhya, p.319.

⁷ Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Sankhya, p.233.

⁸ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:20, p.169.

⁹ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:21, p.169.

¹⁰ Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Sankhya, p.14.

Arāḍa explained the causes of the cycle of existence (*samsāra*). He told that wrong knowledge (*ajñāna*), the power of the act (*karma*) and desire (*trṣṇā*) were at the root of rebirth (mundane existence). The foolish individual person abides in these three items, so he does not go beyond that “being” or bondage.¹ The cause and effect of *Arāḍa*’s *Darśana* is similar to the teaching of *Paticcasamuppāda* from Buddhism. According to the cycle of Dependent Origination, ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) are two original causes. *Avidyā* (*avijjā*) leads to *Kamic* deeds in these two *Darśana*. It is a common assumption of these systems which taught that all existences are suffering.

As the exposition of *Arāḍa*, the wise man can now win from the first trance to the fourth trance. If the fool immersed or dissociated in only one trance he will attain the plains called the *Brahmā* or the *Ābhāsura* deities or the *Śubhakṛtsna* deities or the *Vṛhatphala* deities.

According to the *Abhidhamma*, these deities are located in four *Jhāna* realms from the *Rūpāvacara* realms. Venerable Sayādaw U *Sīlānanda* explains about the planes of existence² in *Handbook of Abhidhamma Studies*. There are 31 planes of existence, namely the four *Apāyas* realms, human realm, six *deva* realms and *Brahmā* realms. *Brahmā* realms is them. *Brahmā* realms are divided into sixteen *Rūpāvacara* realms and four *Arūpāvacara* realms. In the *Rūpāvacara Brahmā* realms, the first three realms, *Brahmapārisajja*, *Brahmapurohita* and *Mahābrahmā*, are called first *Jhāna* realms. These three are located on one plane. They are situated in space. Then above them there are another three: *Parittābhā*, *Appamāṇābhā* and *Ābhassara*. These three are called second *Jhāna* realms. The third three (*Parittasubha*, *Appamāṇasubha* and *Subhakiṇha*) are called third *Jhāna* realms. Above them are two realms: one is *Vehapphala*, and the other is *Asaññasatta*. These two realms and *Suddhāvāsa* are called the fourth *Jhāna* realms. But *Arāḍa* did not point out the realms of *Suddhāvāsa*. *Suddhāvāsa* has five realms above *Vehapphala* and *Asaññasatta*. ‘*Suddhāvāsa*’ means the abode of pure beings. This is the realm of pure beings. They are pure because they are all *Anāgāmīs*. Only *Anāgāmīs* are born in these five Pure Abodes.³

Then *Arāḍa* explained the methods of how to win the four trances,⁴ that is space, the infinite and nothingness, step by step. The steps of trances to attain the last goal are the same as the *Pāḷi* Canon. From the point of view of *Abhidhamma*, the above description is same with the *Arūpajhānas* (formless *jhānas*), from *Ākāśānañcāyatana* *jhāna* to *Ākiñcaññāyatana* *jhāna*. *Arāḍa* said that some wise people would think of the non-existence of anything should name *Ākiñcañña*, i.e. talking the universe as an abode of nothingness or asserting absolute want of any existence, and such men might be called *Mokṣa* (liberated), after they went out of the body like a bird from its cage. According to the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*,⁵ the *Bodhisattva* studied *Ālāra*’s doctrine which led through a series of meditation exercises up to the “sphere of nothingness” (*Ākiñcaññāyatana*), i.e. being conscious of nothing at all in a state of deep abstraction.

After listening to this doctrine *Bodhisattva* thinks that it does not certainly lead to final beatitude, since the knower of field (*ātman*) is not totally abandoned. Although *ātman* liberated from still the primary and secondary, constituents possesses the quality of giving birth, like a seed to bear fruit in cycle of suffering. Thus *Bodhisattva* was not satisfied on learning the doctrine of *Arāḍa*. Therefore, *Bodhisattva* refused the doctrine of *Arāḍa*, left his hermitage and went to that of another ascetic named *Udraka*.

¹ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:23, p.170.

² Handbook of Abhidhamma Studies, p.133-135.

³ Handbook of Abhidhamma Studies, p.134.

⁴ The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha, 12:49-63, p.134-136.

⁵ *Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi*, p.163-165.

Conclusion

The *Buddhacarita*, life of the *Buddha* is composed in excellent style appearing only after many years of *Buddha's Parinirvāna*. The twelfth chapter, *ArāḍaDarśana* described expositions of *Arāḍa* to *Bodhisattva*. In this chapter, we can find *Arāḍa's* teaching and his view of salvation in detail. As the *Buddhacarita*, the teaching of *Arāḍa* can't seen in *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* Buddhist Literatures concerning biography of the *Buddha*.

In many points of *Arāḍa's* teaching or *Sāṃkhya Darśana* there are several significant points of similarities of terms, methods and accepted beliefs in *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna*. We can find some similarities of terms in *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy and Buddhism. These are *Pradhāna* from *Sāṃkhya* is the same to *Avidyā* from Buddhism, *Ahaṃkāra* is to *Vijñāna* and *Nāmarūpa* is the same as *Tanmātras*. And then we can see some interesting points of two methods are as follows:

- (1) *Arāḍa's* goal seems to be the *Ākiñcaññāyatana-Jñāna* as the *Pāli* Canon.
- (2) *Bodhisattva* had been trained generally in the method of the Hermit *Arāḍa* who had attained the *Ākiñcaññāyatana-Jñāna*. Finally, he dissatisfied on this attainment.
- (3) For the sake of *Nirvāna*, *Bodhisattva* denied the system of salvation (*Mokṣa*) from the teachings of *Arāḍa*. Buddhism is also an heterodox system (*nāstika*) rejecting *ātman* beliefs, austerities (*tapas*).

Therefore, *Arāḍa's Darśana* from the *Buddhacarita* is noteworthy what are the beliefs and methods of *Arāḍa's* system as he preached to the *Bodhisattva* in search of ultimate truth called *satya*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Adjunct Rector Dr. Tin Maung Hla, Pro Rector Dr. Khin Thant Sin and Editorial Board of Yangon University of Distance Education, for the kind permission to do this research. I am grateful to Sayamagyī Dr. Theingi Cho, Professor and Head, Department of Oriental Studies.

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The Merit of Donating Four Material Requisites

Mar Lar Oo*

Abstract

This paper presents the *pāli* vocabulary discussing the monks' four material Requisites such as alms food, robe, monastery and drug, the initiation of being allowed to accept the donation of that four material requisites and the benefits gained by the donor and the receiver in the donation of that four material requisites. Moreover, it also describes the benefits enjoyed by the donor of four material requisites.

Keywords: alms food, robe, monastery, drug

Introduction

The Buddhists who believe in the Three Gems are fond of Meritorious deeds. They believe that if they do meritorious deeds, they will gain two kinds of merits not only at the

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