

A Study of the Four Modes of Practices in the Paṭhamakhamasutta

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Abstract

This paper presents the four modes practices in the *Paṭhamakhamasutta*. The four modes are the practice tolerant, intolerant practice, self-controlled practice and tranquility practice. These facts are described and detail in this paper. This paper highlights the four practices which can be destined to Nibbana.

Key words; *tolerant, intolerant, self-controlled, tranquility*.

Introduction

Paṭipadā Vagga includes the *Catuttha Paṇṇasaka* in *Catutkka Nipāta*. This Vagga consists of ten suttas as follows:

1. *Samkhitta Sutta*,
2. *Vitthāra Sutta*,
3. *Asubha Sutta*,
4. *Paṭhamakhama Sutta*,
5. *Dutiyakhama Sutta*,
6. *Ubhaya Sutta*,
7. *Mahāmogallāna Sutta*,
8. *Sāriputta Satta*,
9. *Sasaṅkhāra Sutta*, and
10. *Yuganandha Sutta*.¹

Paṭhamakhamasutta is fourth in the *paṭipadā vagga* of the *Ānguttaranikāya*. This Sutta the Buddha preached to the bhikkhus. Khama means patient, forgiving, enduring, bearing, and tolerant.² *Paṭipadā* means mode of progress, practice, path, way and method.³ In this sutta include about the four practices (*paṭipadā*). They are intolerant practice (*akkhama paṭipadā*), tolerant practice (*khana paṭipadā*), self-controlled practice (*dhamma paṭipadā*) and tranquility practice (*sama paṭipadā*).⁴

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to highlight the teachings of the Buddha, and consequently to make the entire world become happy, successful, wealthy and peaceful.

Findings

In this world, ordinary human beings are being filled with greed and anger. Because greed and anger increase, intolerance arises among the human society. So, world war and quarrels are happening frequently. There need to be tolerance for peace in our world. In this paper, the consequence of tolerance can be found with behavior.

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¹ A I.467; BGS II.153

² P.T.S 234.

³ P.T.S. 396.

⁴ A I,470; BGS II.157.

Discussion

It is recommended that everyone be tolerant towards each other.

Intolerant practice and Tolerant practice

Out of the practices mentioned above, the intolerant and tolerant are first described comparatively.

In describing the practice of intolerant and the practice of tolerant in the *Paṭhamakhamasutta*, the natures of taking revenge or not taking revenge are found to be described. It is described that the animosity is lengthened by taking revenge. Forgiveness restores peace. If hatred is with hatred, the fire of hatred cannot be extinguished. Therefore, the Buddha preached in the *Dhammapada* as follows:

‘This person abuses me. This person torments me. This person overcomes me. This person takes my property. For the persons who bear grudge thus, the fire of enmity will never be quenched.’¹

‘This person abuses me. This person torments me. This person overcomes me. This person takes my wealth. For the persons who does not bear grudge like this, the fire of enmity be quenched.’²

‘In this world, pacification cannot be achieved by retaliation hatred with hatred. Pacification can only be achieved by not retaliation enmity. This is the natural law.’³

In this world some persons abuse the abuser in retaliation, they hurt the person who hurts them. They strike the person who strikes them. This conduct is intolerant. The conduct of not abusing the abuser is tolerant.⁴

Regarding tolerant, it is expounded in the *Sutta Nipāta Aṭṭhakathā* as: “Tolerant is the acceptance of things that have befallen on oneself without repulsing. The monk who is replete with *khanṭī* (tolerant) ought to bear tolerant as if one does not hear or see the abusing with ten kinds of abusive epithets, killing, arresting, tormenting, etc.”⁵

The meaning of *khanṭī* is expounded in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* as: “Tolerant is restraining oneself not to get angry when someone commits physical or verbal offence on oneself, affection in order not to cause tear shedding to others is called *khanṭī*.”⁶

Enduring of cold, heat, hunger, gnat, mosquito, snake, wind, heat of the sun, etc. cannot be escaped without enduring. Therefore, it is called *adhivāsanakhantī* (not standing as opposition). The virtuous noble persons praise *khanṭī* as a noble conduct. Tolerant is praised by the Buddha, Devas, Sakka and hermits. The Buddha preached in the *Gāthā* of the *Brāhmaṇa Vagga* of *Dhammapada* as “Him I call a *Brāhmaṇa* who is free from evil deeds.”⁷

The Buddha preached, “A person endures the abuse or beating. Such a person who is replete with tolerant is he who has avoided evil deeds.”⁸

¹ Khu I.13.

² Khu I.13.

³ Khu I.14.

⁴ Al.470.

⁵ SnA II.30; Vin II.89.

⁶ Dhs.260.

⁷ MA III.83; မင်္ဂလဝဂ္ဂ.

⁸ SnA II.31.

He who is replete with tolerant is praised by Devas and Sakka. He bears tolerant toward a weaker person. It is a noble act. One must always bear tolerant to the weaker.¹

It is found to be described in the *Sarabhaṅga Jātaka* as: “One does not worry a little bit by dispelling anger. Gratefulness is praised by the hermits. Bear tolerant to the abusive words of all people. Bearing tolerant is noble.”²

The disadvantages of bearing intolerant and the advantages of bearing tolerant are found to be described in the *Paṭhama-akkhanti Sutta* of *Pañcama Nipāta Pāḷi, Aṅguttara Nikāya* as follows:

A person who is deficient in tolerant will experience the following disadvantages:

1. displeasure and hatred of people,
2. animosity,
3. having many faults,
4. death with delusion,
5. falling to *apayas*, worlds of misery after death.

A person who bears tolerant will enjoy the following advantages:

1. affection of many people,
2. friendliness.
3. paucity of faults,
4. death without delusion, and
5. being destined to celestial abode after death.

It is also found to be described that one who is quick to get angry is a wicked person. A person who bears tolerant is able to overcome difficulties. It is equivalent to a military victory.³

Self-controlled practice

Of the four kinds practice in the *Paṭhamakhama Sutta*, Self-controlled must be presented after presenting bearing tolerant and non-bearing tolerant. Here self-controlled is not controlling another person. It is self-controlled. In other words, one must restrain oneself so that one is not under the influence of unwholesome mental factors.

In describing the self-controlled in this sutta, one must control the six faculties of the senses (*indriyas*), namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. On seeing a visible object with the eyes, on hearing a sound with the ears, on smelling a scent with nose, on sampling a taste with tongue, on feeling a touch with body, on conceiving a thought with the mind, one must not take in the mental images of the opposing objects of sight, sound, etc. but one must stay without observing the sense object in detail. When one cannot control oneself, the mental images will be taken object will be seen in detail. Then one will be engulfed with greed, *abhijjā*, misery, dissatisfaction, anger, grief and unwholesome wicked mental factors. Therefore, is no chance for the sense impressions. This is the self-controlled.

¹ Sna II.31.

² Sna II.31.

³ A II.222.

The eye which is the base of sight is called *cakkhāyatana*. The ear which is the base of sound is called *sotāyatana*. The nose which is the base of smell is called *ghānāyatana*. The tongue which is the base of taste is called *jivhāyatana*. The body which is the base of touch is called *kāyāyatana*. The mind which is the base of thought is called *manāyatana*. As these six *āyatanas* (senses bases) are continuous with the body, they are called *ajjhakkāyatanas*. These sense bases are easily memorized as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. They are also called six objective *dhātus* (elements).¹

All forms of sight are called *rūpāyatana*. All forms of sound are called *saddāyatana*. All forms of smell are called *gandhāyatana*. All forms of taste are called *rasāyatana*. All forms of touch are called *phoṭṭhabbāyatana*. All forms of mind object are called *dhammāyatana*. As these six objects of sense are located outside the body, they are called “*bāhirāyatana*.” They are external sense objects.

The external sense base can be easily noted as sight, sound, smell, taste, tangibility, and mind object. They are also called six subjective *dhātus*. The twelve *āyatanas* are called *dvādasāyatana*. The internal *āyatanas* are called with reference to being beneficial, being essential and being fundamental to the body. The external *āyatanas* are called with reference to effect, essentiality and basis.²

Of the sights within the eye and the sights outside the eye, the eye is primary. Then sight is not primary. The presence of the eye is more primary than the presence of sight. When the six subjective *dhātus* (*bāhirāyatanas*) and the six objective *dhātus* (*ajjhakkāyatanas*) collide with each other, *phassa* arises. Making contact between *bāhirāyatana* and *ajjhakkāyatana* is called *phassa*.

The Buddha preached in the *Samyutta Nikāya* as: “The mind which distinguishes the *cakkhupasāda* and *rūpāramāṇa* arises.” Meeting together of these factors is the *phassa* or contact.³

The six *ajjhakkāyatanas*, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are objective dhātus and the six *bāhirāyatanas* called visible object, sound, smell, taste, tangible object and mind object are six subjective *dhātus*. The six *viññāṇas* (consciousness) of visible object, consciousness of smell, consciousness of taste, consciousness of tangible object and consciousness of mind object are six resultant *dhātus*. Thus, there are 18 *dhātus* in total. They must be controlled.

Tranquility practice

In the *Paṭhamakhamasutta* the fourth practice is tranquility practice. In this practice, the unwholesome initial thoughts that arise are calmed down and prevent the new arising of unwholesome initial thoughts. The unwholesome *vitakkas* are *kāmavitakka* (sensual thought), *byāpādavitakka* (thought of ill-will, hatred) and *vihimsavitakka* (thought of tormenting others). The thought of the five *kāmaguṇas* such as visible object, sound, smell, taste, and tangible object is called *kāmavitakka*. In this thought covetousness, craving and greed are intense. Because of craving and greed, one suffers from sorrow, bodily suffering and misery. Therefore, the prevention of *kāmavitakka* from arising is the practice of tranquility. Should *kāmavitakka* arise, it must not be kept. It must be quickly calmed down. This is the practice of tranquility.⁴

¹ D III,84.

² D III,84. Vi III,373.

³ S I.300.

⁴ D III,152.

The thought of destroying others is called *byāpādavitaṅka*. This *vitakka* is hatred. One who is angry does not know cause and effect, such a person tends to act thoughtlessly and cause detrimental effects. Because of the hatred in one's mind, such a man thinks of destroying others. This is called *byāpādavitaṅka*. The ability to prevent this kind of thought from arising is the practice of tranquility. If this *vitakka* arises, the ability to extinguish this *vitakka* without keeping it is the practice of tranquility. Thought of tormenting others is called *vihimsavitaṅka*. This *vitakka* involves *dosa* and *moha*. The lack of reasoning power to distinguish between proper or improper is due to *moha* (delusion). This *moha* dispels good deed but manifests the evil deed. Because of *dosa* (anger), one thinks of tormenting others. The efficiency to suppress the *vihimsavitaṅka* from arising is the practice of tranquility. If this *vitakka* arises, it must not be kept but it must be quickly eradicated. This act is also the practice of tranquility.

Conclusion

This paper describes the practice of tolerant, the practice of intolerant, practice of self-controlled and practice of tranquility. Of these four practices, the tolerant and intolerant are very distinctive but self-controlled and tranquility is subtle. In the practice of self-controlled, a person admonishes his mind to suppress the arising of unwholesome thoughts in his continuum. That is why the practice of self-controlled and the practice of tranquility are described. The source of practice of self-controlled and tranquility are described. The source of practice of self-controlled and tranquility practice is tolerant. If tolerant is practiced, one can be destined to *Nibbāna*. Therefore, the benefits of tolerant and disadvantages of intolerant are first described in the Paṭhamakkamasutta in order to see the source of the goodness and badness.

Nevertheless, success can be achieved by bearing tolerant and one will be led to ruin by bearing grudge.

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