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THE BUDDHA AND PROBLEMS OF CASTE

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ABSTRACT:

Caste is a progressive process of society based on action, occupation, and social status that gradually forms the caste system. The caste in Indian society reflected injustice, inequality in roles, positions and interests between one caste and another, between one ethnic group and another in the same Indian society.

KEYWORDS: process of society based, Indian society, political power.



I. INTRODUCTION:-

At the time when the Buddha was still alive, the caste conflict became fierce, creating gaps, between the ruler and the ruled, between the rich and the poor. Low castes got into misery, creating a mess and inequality society. So, how did Brahman assert his caste? How did Buddha perceive the caste?

II. CONTENTS:

1. The inequality of the caste regime:

Indian society is contradictory and unjust in the clear division of the four castes. The Khattiya caste held political power defended national territory. Brahmin caste, spiritual leaders, advocated all sacrifices and was regarded as an influential

person union and the highest position. The Brahmin caste advocates four types of service:

+ The Brahmin is advocate four types of services: Brahmin service Brahmin, or Khattiya (noble) service Brahmin, or Vessa (merchant) service Brahmin, or Sudda (worker) service Brahmin.

+ The Brahmin advocates serving Khattiya as follows: Khattiya service Khattiya, or Vessa service Khattiya, or Sudda service Khattiya.

+ The Brahmin advocates serving Vessa as follows: Vessa service Vessa, or Sudda service Vessa.

+ The Brahmin advocates serving Sudda as follows: Sudda service Sudda, because no one else can service worker.¹

These four types of liturgy are imposed by the Brahmin caste and through which we see injustice. The two castes Vessa (merchants) and Sudda (worker) are considered to be lowly and vile in society. But the Buddha is not like that, and he does not say that man does not need the service that he points out if it is unnecessary to serve and to serve as a worse human being and to serve but to make people better necessity: "I should serve the one in whose service I become better and not worse when serving him."²

The Brahmin caste also imposes on other castes as follows: Brahmins prescribe wealth and wandering alms; Khattiya'wealth is bow quiver; Vessa'wealth farming cattle-breeding;

¹ Majjhima Nikāya, *Esukāri Sutta*, p.786.

² Ibid., p.787.

Sudda'wealth is the sickle and carrying-pole.³

Despite such provisions, it is a combination and has never agreed by other castes. The Buddha was not like that. He said that depending on the daily work of each person to create different types of property, sometimes a caste may have various features rather than rigid and specific.

However, the contradiction in society also caused by the Brahman caste created some unreasonable rules and clearly showed his dictatorship in the matter of caste.

2. BRAHMAN'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE CASTE:

The Brahmin caste was always arrogant and thought that highest caste. Their caste was the blessers, bringing peace to the other castes, and the different castes were the be thankful, respectful and listen to their direction. Brahmin asserted their position in the caste as follows: The Brahmin caste is the highest caste, and another castes are base; only the Brahmin caste is fair, and another castes are dark. The Brahmins are purified, all castes rest are not. Only someone Brahmin are true children of Brahmā, born from the Brahmā's mouth, born of Brahma, created by Brahma, heirs of Brahma.⁴

It is because of this paranoia that the Brahmin caste was angry when seeing the people in their caste who practised following the Buddha's religion. They were heavy on criticism with aggressive, undetermined attitude and even the Buddha from Khattiya was looked down upon and scorned by them.

3. BUDDHA'S CONCEPTION OF CASTE:

3.1. Caste created by Brahmin:

Is Brahman the highest caste? Who has discerned and given to other castes is inferior? Are Brahmin caste born from the Brahma's mouth? Through the Aggañña Sutta, of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Buddha taught as follows: We can see women and wives of Brahmins, who menstruate and become pregnant, and they have babies and give suck. And yet these womb-born Brahmins talk about being born from Brahma's mouth, etc. These Brahmins misrepresent Brahma, tell lies and earn much demerit".⁵

Not only that, the Assalāyana Sutta, of Majjhima Nikāya, also has the passage of the Buddha's words as follows: *"The Brahmin women are seen having their periods, becoming pregnant, giving birth, and giving suck."*⁶

Thereby, the Buddha pointed out the inadequacy in thinking that the Brahmin caste was born from the mouth of Brahma. While the apparent fact exists, everyone, including the Brahmin caste, is pregnant and taken from the mother. So the saying that Brahmins caste is descendants of Brahma is the heir of Brahma is unfounded. Social advocacy by Brahma is impossible to exist. Therefore, we can see that people are created by karma and craving, by mating between father and mother, by predestination, not by any creator or creator. Brahmin caste wants to improve their position and show their supremacy, which makes up the myths that they were born from the mouth of Brahma.

3.2. Caste is base on biology:

Buddha is based on biology to explain class as follows:

*"Know first the grass and trees:
Though they lack self-awareness,*

.....

Next come the moths and butterflies

And so on through to ants and termites:

Their birth is their distinctive mark,

³ Ibid., p.788.

⁴ Dīgha Nikāya, *Aggañña Sutta*, p.407.

⁵ Ibid., p.408.

⁶ Majjhima Nikāya, *Assalāyana Sutta*, p.764.

For many are the kind of birth.”⁷

Each species of species, including plants and animals, has many different types. Each species is born with different kinds and types of nature but divided into different stages. There are species of vines, ancient species, carnivores, herbivores, livestock species, poultry species, etc. People in society are of the same type but have many different types, from which to create differences between regions. Therefore, the caste formed based on the differences of work, environment and social conditions along with the position that they built. The Buddha confirms that in establishing in the caste are base on the economic.

3.3. The caste is base on the economics:

In the Vāseṭṭha Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, there is a passage as follows:

“If there is a Sudda who lives well with wealth, grain, gold or silver, he may have another Sudda who is a loyal servant, gets up early, stays up late, executes all his boss orders, does pleasing to everyone, respectful words; or he may have a Khattiya, or he may have a Brahmin, or he may have a Vessa who is a faithful servant, getting up early, staying up late, executing all the bosses, pleasing people, loving words”.⁸

In this passage, Venerable Kaccāna asked a king about the Sudda caste. If they had a rich and prosperous life, could they still hire other castes to service and service them? The king agreed and replied that it was possible. From this, it shows that caste does not depend on skin colour, ethnicity or castes, but on the dominant economic life.

The four castes are equal or unequal? And what is the thought of the king here? Indeed, Venerable Kaccāna, if the situation is like that, the four castes of this nature are a peer. Here, we don't see any difference. The king claimed that the four castes were equal, could not assume that the other castes were inferior and despised.⁹

3.4. Caste is base on established professions:

The Buddha said that the caste is base on the different occupations of each person as: “Who makes his living by agriculture, he is a farmer, not a Brahmin. Who makes his living by varied crafts, he is a craftsman, not a Brahmin. Who makes his living by merchandise, he is a merchant, not a Brahmin. Who makes his living by serving others, he is a servant, not a Brahmin. Who makes his living by stealing, he is a robber, not a Brahmin. Who makes his living by archery, he is a soldier, not a Brahmin. Who makes his living by priestly craft, he is a chaplain, not a Brahmin. Whoever governs among men, the town and realm, he is a ruler, not a Brahmin.”¹⁰

Thus, the caste is not fixed and specialized. A person can move from this caste to other castes. Why? Because each person can choose for themselves different jobs, then they can give up this job and switch to another post, just as giving up this caste to move to another caste.

3.5. Caste is not popular:

When the Buddha stays alive, the castes were not widespread in India. There are at least two countries that do not influence the castes as in the Assalāyana Sutta, and the Buddha pointed out: “*What do you think, Assalāyana? Have you heard that in Yona and Kamboja and in pther outland countries there are only two castes, masters and slaves, and that masters become slaves and slaves masters?*”¹¹

Therefore, a person with the situation which becomes an employee, when he was rich, he can hire someone else and become a boss. A boss, when he is a poor person, still goes to work as a servant

⁷ Majjhima Nikāya, *Vāse • • ha Sutta*, p.800.

⁸ Majjhima Nikāya, *Madhurā Sutta*, p.699.

⁹ Ibid., p.701.

¹⁰ Majjhima Nikāya, *Vāse • • ha Sutta*, p.801-802.

¹¹ Majjhima Nikāya, *Assalāyana Sutta*, p.764.

for others. Here, show that the castes are not famous in this region. Why? The caste problem do not place seriously. Each person can change his status.

4. EVERYONE IS EQUAL TO THE LAW:

Equality before the law is clearly shown in the following passage:

"What do you think, great king? Suppose a Brahmin...a merchant...a worker were to break into houses...or seduce another's wife, and if your men arrested him and produced him, saying: "Sir, this is the culprit; command what punishment for him you wish", how would you treat him?

*We would have him excuted, Master Kaccana, or we would have him fined, or we would have him exiled, or we would do with him as he deserved. Why is that? Because he has lost his former status of a Brahmin...a merchant...a worker, and is simply reckoned as aRobber."*¹²

The Brahmin or Khattiya caste is guilty. They will still punish the same; without discrimination, whether Brahmin or Khattiya caste, but the other castes are severe punish. This equality was affirmed by King Madhurā, proving that this region was not subject to class inequality.

5. HUMAN BEING ARE EQUAL ON THE PATH OF PRACTICE:

Every caste, even though there is a different cowardly, but there is no difference in terms of practice. As in the Madhurā Sutta follow:

"What do you think, great king? Suppose a Brahmin...a merchant...a worker, having shaved off his hair and bread...and would be celibate, virtuous, of good character. How would you treat him?

*We would pay homeage to him, Master Kaccāna, or rise up to him, or invite him to be seated; or we would invite him to accept robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal requisites; or we would arrange for him lawful guarding, defence, and protection. Why is that? Because he has lost his former status of a Brahmin...a merchant...a worker, and is simply reckoned as a recluse."*¹³

Through this shows that, regardless of any caste, if renunciants practice the dharma, live virtuously, uphold the precepts, they are respectable people who offer real plants, without any castes division, no distinguish this is the royal family renunciation, the other is a renunciate farmer.

III. CONCLUSION:

The Buddha did not advocate abolishing the caste, which he pointed out to us the unjustified injustice of the caste. The caste of everyone, depending on the life and position of each person, there is a difference. The imposition, harshness in the caste is a condemnation. The Buddha was skilful in raising this inequality to let people realize and have the right direction. The Buddha pointed out the mistakes when we put ourselves in the upper class and decry and force other castes.

We need to understand any castes in society; if they are standing in the Sangha, it means all of them equal, like the hundreds of rivers, rush to the sea, but the water only a salty taste. From here, people in India have opened a new life, not shy about the regime of status and caste. The Buddha is a master who shows us the right path, and accordingly, everyone, every caste is equal in terms of practice and liberation.

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¹² Majjhima Nikāya, Madhurā Sutta, p.701.

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