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NON- SELF: THE PROCESS OF LIBERATION

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ABSTRACT:

Non-self is the central teaching of Buddhism, because the Buddha enlightened from this doctrine and then he taught all his disciples to follow it to lead a peaceful and liberating life. It can be said that the basis of the selfless teaching has great power to help its practitioners have a happy, peaceful life, while bringing peace to humanity. Because people who practice the Selflessness always bring joy to others and they are not selfish to themselves. Therefore, nowadays the doctrine of Non-self is being applied to practice all over the world because it has great value of helping people to live on the compassionate basis of Buddhism.



KEYWORDS: *central teaching , peaceful life.*

INTRODUCTION :

More than twenty-five centuries ago, the country of India was a multicultural, multi-religious, ideological complex ... It is because of that complexity that so many doctrines were born fighting and competing. To compete with each other, everyone thinks their doctrine is better. In addition, the addition of class divisions and sex discrimination has made Indian society chaotic. All the chaos was due to attachment, causing people at that time to live in ignorance not knowing which way to go. In the midst of that human

being immersed in suffering there appeared a great man who brought the intellectual light to shatter the darkness. That is Shakyamuni Buddha. With the doctrine of *pañiccasamuppāda*, He broke all the opinions of the pagan schools, brought justice to society and brought peaceful happiness to gods and humans. *"In the midst of the sixty-two Indian theories attached to the ego, amid humanity being attached to the self, and engulfed in the cycle of birth and death, the voice of dependent origination - non-self must be the voice of enlightenment and liberation of suffering"*¹

CONTENTS

I. Definition of the ego and Non-Self

I.1. Definition of Self.

The Ego is the "I" (Atman). From this self, there is a distinction between oneself and the person from which engenders attachment. because this self has sent beings immersed in samsaric suffering.

In the Upanishad school, the self is smaller than rice grains, smaller than sesame seeds, mustard seeds, millet. The larger than the earth, huger than the air, bigger than the firmament and all the world. The self was beyond the thought of discussion, and the firm self firmly: The weapon does

¹ Thich Thien Chon, *Buddhist concept* , Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House, Vietnam ,1999, p. 166.

not puncture, the fire does not burn, the water does not get wet, the wind does not dry out, the ego invariants, is transparent, sustainable, immutable and permanent.

I.2. Definition of Egolessness

Non-self in the popular sense of not having an ego or an "ego" is not real. Buddhism defines "egolessness" which means that we have no identity, immutability, and freedom. Not only people are "non-self" but Buddha also teaches "all dharmas are non-self" (things are non-self). Because all the dharmas are not born and destroyed, all dharma are transformed and are not independent. Ego is the process of purification or the root of ignorance that obscures the mind of enlightenment. In the Basic Sutta, the Buddha teaches very clearly, the understanding of ordinary people using their imagination to perceive things according to their self-grasping should be attached to craving as the root of samsara. And the non-self is invisible, hiding under the shadow of the self. That is the true self.

II. The Principle of Dependent Origination.

II. 1. The law of dependent origination.

The principle of Interdependent origination is supreme enlightenment by the Buddha. Since then, the Blessed One was honored, the person professed with the ten titles Tathagata according to the Samyutta Sutta (Episode 2) The Blessed One (Bhikkhu) - the teacher - (Vipassi), the next six Shakyamuni Buddha - the previous ones, the Buddha Shakyamuni and all the Buddha in the future are realizing the infinite bodhicitta from the doctrine of *pañiccasamuppāda*. In Buddhist doctrine, interdependent origination plays a crucial role, not only did the Buddha use the chain of twelve conditions to solve life and death problems, but also the Mahayana's essential teachings were taken as a base to develop.

In Buddhist Theory of Self-theory, the Buddha summarized the principle of dependent origination:

Because this is present, that is present
 Because this is not present, the other is not present
 Because this was born, that was born
 Because this one is destroyed, that one will also be destroyed.

Thus, dependent origination consists of twelve links and mutual interrelations that form a long series of afflictions that govern the entire life of all beings in samsara. This is also a map that maps the process of samsara. So, the Buddha taught Ananda "*Ananda, because of not enlightened and lack of understanding of this dependent origination teaching, the present beings are disturbed like a cocoon, tangled like a skein, like Munja grass. It is impossible to get out of misery, evil animals, hell, birth, and death*"²

From the twelve causal factors of dependent origination, we see that all phenomena are due to dependent conditions. The presence of a dharma is actually just the presence of karmic condition. At the same time we will not see a shadow of the ego appearing in the world of dependent origination or all things are born of conditions, so it is anattā.

II.2. The true nature of things is selflessness

The doctrine of Dependent origination speaks of the truth of non-self and denies self. It shows us all that exists in this vast world, that nothing can exist independently without relying on each other, that is, "One is all, all is one". One is that all is synonymous with dependent origination and non-self. Because it is non-self, it has no meaning in permanent or impermanence, with or without ... it escapes all forms.

² *Digha Nikaya, The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Mahanidana Sutta*, Translation by Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publications, USA, 1996, p. 223.

The doctrine of dependent origination helps us to see that dhammas are non-self. Selflessness can be said to be the unique teaching of Buddhism. Because we no longer have an ego, we are completely beyond the distinctions that bring suffering: "If we go into the analysis of the teachings, then from the doctrine of dependent origination we see clearly the non-self of the dhammas. Selflessness is the unique teaching of Buddhism, the most unique of the religious history and the thought of mankind, which is the main foundation for Mahayana and Theravada teachings.

No-self is the opposite form of self. The self is born, old, sick, death, impermanent. On the contrary, no-self is unborn, undying, peaceful, pure, that is beyond ignorance.

According to the doctrine of dependent origination, the past is not-self, the present is no-self, the future is not-self. Because we do not understand the theorem of dependent origination, we accept the ego, when we have accepted the ego, we accept it now like this, we are now like that, the past is like that, the future is the same. But if we understand the doctrine of dependent origination then that self will not exist³

III. The process of liberation

III.1. Contemplation to destroy ignorance

The purpose of a Dharma practitioner is to practice the path of liberation. Thus, to reach that goal, we must use contemplation to break the disturbing mental ignorance, that is, to see clearly the arising, the cutting-off of the twelve links. In the process of contemplation, we will realize clearly that the reality of all phenomena is not-self, then we will be free from suffering.

*"Once one knows how samsara is perpetuated, meditation on the twelvefold chain of dependent origination leads to the cessation of those desires that fuel the cycle. this is the Fourth of the Noble Truths, that of the path to the cessation of suffering."*⁴

When we understood fully the Four Noble Truths, Ignorance is completely destroyed. Relating the cause of Ignorance, the Buddha has said that the origin of Ignorance cannot be found in this endless cycle of rebirths.

Reverse Order of Dependent Origination to explain the Cessation of Suffering

- Without Ignorance, there are no Volitional Activities.
- Without Volitional Activities, there is no Consciousness.
- Without Consciousness, there are no Mentality and Matter.
- Without Mentality and Matter, there are no Six Sense Bases.
- Without the Six Sense Bases, there is no Contact.
- Without Contact, there is no Feeling.
- Without Feeling, there is no Craving.
- Without Craving, there is no Clinging.
- Without Clinging, there is no Becoming.
- Without Becoming, there is no Birth.
- Without Birth, there is no Decay, Death and Suffering.

This is how the Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering is explained by the formula of Dependent Origination. When a person has fully understood the Four Noble Truths, One will become an Arhat. For Arhats who have completely eradicated Ignorance, the chain of Pratyekabuddha, or Wheel of Reincarnation, is broken and he will no longer be reborn and suffer.

³ Thich Thien Sieu, *Non-self is Nirvana*, Religious publishing house, Ha Noi, 2000, p. 92.

⁴ Mark Siderit and Shoryu Katsura, *Nagarjuna's Middle Way*, Wisdom Publications, USA, 2013. P.315.

III.2. Break down the Ego

To break the ego, we have to cut through ignorance of craving, seeing that the five aggregates are not real. Man is a collection of spirit and body, it is caused by rupa, feeling, thought, action, and consciousness which form, it is artificial and unreal. One of the five aggregates cannot be said to be "me", if this body is me then there is no suffering. This is called selflessness. In the Samyutta, a wandering man asked Buddha, Lord Buddha! Is it self? Buddha silent did not answer. Ananda questioned, the Buddha taught Ananda: If An answer, "A self," as such, belongs to the permanent attachment. And if we answer such "no-self" that belongs to impermanence ... If we answer "there is self" then our answer conforms to the wisdom "all dhammas are non-self. ". If we answer "there is no self", it will confuse the wandering monk even more: "Previously we had a self, now there is no self. In life, the reason we suffer is mostly due to our ego-attachment. From that great "self" we distinguish ourselves - the other, because of the ego we suffer samsara. So just by eliminating the ego, suffering is no longer. Therefore, the Buddha taught that one should always contemplate non-self, the four elements, and the five aggregates that make up this body, because of the external conditions combined, but the body "identical" to the self is not real.

We must understand that the root of samsara is ignorance, ignorance is a misconception of reality which does not have "self" to have "self". Samsara is a misconception of self, but there is really no self in samsara. Practicing is the way out of samsara, that is, coming out of the bondage of the attachment, eliminating that attachment. When we eradicate the ego means we have eradicated all delusion.

IV. Application of Selfless teachings in life.

The doctrine of egolessness is the foundation and basis of the other dharma practitioners and also the attainment goal of the Arahats and Bodhisattvas. In life, the reason we suffer and sadness is because we still see that "I" is too big. Therefore, the basis of the doctrine of egolessness will smash the "I" and "mine", when we see the non-self nature of the dhammas the craving and attachment will gradually dissolve and destroy, and suffering will be severed to attain liberation. Then the reality of dependent origination returns to itself. It's like that, forever like that. Buddhist Sutra called this Buddha nature. It is not causal or conditioned by the law of dependent origination. Cause and effect and causation are itself. This is the "emptiness" of the Prajna Sutra, and the "Essence" of the Avatamsaka Sutra and the Nirvana Sutra.

A person who truly ends the ego will be the one who succeeds in life, because they do not feel anger or pain when insulted, but on the contrary, they always reflect back inside their minds to find ways. end all sorrow. From that contemplation they will gain peace of mind because the "self" is no longer there.

In social community relations, the doctrine of egolessness will help people to live more in love with each other, because when they understand the doctrine of egolessness, they will no longer compete for each other's interests. Because if the "self" exists, there will be a lot of jealousy, hatred and so on. world war immerses humanity in the sea of blood, greed - hatred and delusion. So humanity only peace when we no longer see the ego. Peace always accompanies non-self.

The religions that are in conflict with each other are due to the attachment, they think their doctrine is the highest. Since then, controversy and conflict occurred. At this time, only the spirit of egolessness will bring them together.

For Buddhists, if the "self" exists, it is difficult to study the path for penetration, it is difficult to reach inner peace. Because a full glass of water is poured into it and it will spill out. Also, with the mind of practicing and always thinking that it is right and good, there will be no opportunity to penetrate the sublime noble teachings that Buddha has realized. So, in order to be like Buddha, one must practice non-self. When we see selflessness, all right-left, gain - lose in life is a condition for us to practice, or everything becomes normal without any concern. Practicing non-self as well as boxers train body for solid. When not solid, it is easy to be knocked down by an external impact. It is the same for non-self cultivators when they are not yet well-versed, there are many egos who are suffering from an evil word.

If the ego is reduced, then it will be easier to overcome all situations in life and eventually no more suffering.

Buddhism wants to be transmitted in the world, the monks must live on the spirit of Selflessness because they have to practice on the theory of Selflessness, then they have the deep wisdom to teach Buddhists to practice to achieve a happy and peaceful life

CONCLUSION

Thus, in order for a great process of enlightenment to be liberated, the doctrine of non-self will be the only way to bring the practitioner to the ultimate goal. When we understand and practice the doctrine of egolessness, we have prepared for ourselves a blade of wisdom, that blade can cut the persistent links of the cycle of birth and death, and extinguish the flame of greed, sex, at the same time, smashing the crazy evil views of the ego and the attachment. From there, we live peacefully in the middle of life without being bound by any binding. Because we and the universe are merging into each other no longer a separate "self" independent. Buddha said, "When we are pure, we see the world is pure." This shows that reality is dependent on selflessness. This is the Buddha Dharma, the true nature without vanity. The reason we suffer is due to ignorance because we do not understand the nature of the selflessness and arising of phenomena. When we end the suffering, we are synonymous with the enlightenment of dependent origination.

Enlightenment of the doctrine of egolessness will open us the path of light, the path of liberation by right view, no longer dazed by the darkness of ignorance. The spirit of non-self destroys the notion of "I", "mine" and my ego in order to arrive at peace and contentment. Man and life are no-self, without a permanent nature, so within each person, there is always a potential for enlightenment. Practicing selfless teaching will surely bring step by step to the practitioner a life of generosity, altruism, liberation and peace in the present. By the Buddha taught: "Whoever sees interdependent origination sees Dharma, who sees Dharma to see Buddha." To see Buddha is to see ultimate reality, beyond the constraints of the ego world - limited by ignorance, craving, and attachment.

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