ÀJĪVĀTṬHAMAKA SĪLA IN BUDDHIST ETHICS

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ABSTRACT:
This research paper is explaining to the Buddhist ethics in the way of Ājīvātṭhamaka Sīla. Buddhism holds, as the way of liberation from suffering, the middle way which is called Majjhima paṭipadā and also it is the gateway to the Buddhists’ final aspiration (i.e. nibbāna). This way, according to Dhammacakkapavattana sutta, consists of the Noble Eightfold Path such as right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. These are divided into three groups as morality, concentration and wisdom. Morality group (sīlaikkhandha) comprises right speech, right action and right livelihood. Concentration group (samādhikkhandha) comprises right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Wisdom group (paññākkhandha) comprises right view and right thought. Of these, the three constituents of the morality group become Ājīvātṭhamaka sīla. It is also called Sucarita sīla in Buddhism. Sucarita sīla is the methods to more the stage in higher level.

KEYWORDS: noble eightfold path, ājīvātṭhamaka sīla, morality, concentration, wisdom.

INTRODUCTION:
The Buddha preached to living beings for 45 years in accordance with their wishes. In Buddhism, thus, there are many kinds of doctrines like scattered flowers under tree. In Buddhist Council, the greatest disciples of the Buddha put those doctrines into three baskets, having collection alike doctrines. Therefore there are three baskets in Buddhism as such discourses (sutta), disciplines (vinaya) and practical theory (abhidhamma). These are called Tipitaka. But, in brief, there are only three stages of the way to practise leading to the cessation of craving (nibbāna). The first stage consists in the practice of morality or virtue (sīla). The second stage consists in the practice of concentration (samādhi) or Jhāna. And the third stage consists in the practice of realization or wisdom (paññā). Among these, morality or moral precept or virtue (sīla) is foundation of all practices. That is why one cannot attain Jhāna without morality and also cannot attain enlightenment (paññā or nibbāna) without Jhāna. Jhāna (dhyāna) means concentration of mind on meditation; awareness of pure lucidity of mind and equanimity of heart.

In Buddhism, the concept of sīla is very important for human beings. Therefore the leaders of every religion taught to keep sīla. That is why sīla is to observe disciplines and refrain from all evils. A person who is full of sīla never behave badly to hurt other living beings. He or she also feels peaceful in mind and then there becomes peaceful in his or her environment. Hence the Buddha said thats sīla is the first stage foundation of all practices. Thus it should arises the following question to have a proper
understanding of what is sila, in what sense something is called sila and how many kinds of sila are there.

The Concept of Sila

In Buddhism, there are varieties of meaning of sila. It is translated “virtue, morality, precept and behavior” in Buddhist ethics. In the Visuddhimagga, the word sila is defined as follows: “there is virtue as volition, virtue as consciousness-concomitant, virtue as restrain, virtue as transgression.” The word sila literally means nature, character, behavior, habit, etc., in general. It plays a distinctive role. And it is a mode of mind and volition (cetana silam), abstention is virtue (samvaro silam), non-transgression is virtue (avitikkama silam), with the meaning of abandoning it is abstention (pahana thena samvaro) and the moral activities (sabbe kusal dhamma) manifested in verbal or physical or mental action.

Sila is the twofold volition due to which one keeps oneself restrained from immoral deeds such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc., and also due to which one fulfils one’s duties assigned to one with full devotion and sincerity. In this context, sila has been said to be fourfold namely, volition is sila, psychic factors are sila, restraint is sila, and non-transgression is sila.

The concept of sila denotes good conduct, moral practice or code of morality. In Buddhist ethics, there are many kind of sila as Pañca sila, Aţtha sila, Nava sila, Dasa sila, Pătimokkha samvara sila, Indriyasamvara sila and Ājivatthamaka sila etc. Sila, especially Ājivatthamakasila is regarded as the foundation of Buddhist way of living. This is not known like Pañca sila (five precepts) but it is very beneficial for people who are practising insight meditation and also their societies. Therefore, in order to be peaceful society and in mind, everybody should observe disciplines of it.

Today the world is full of the harmful things on account of the irritation, dissatisfaction, disharmony, subjugation, famine, the poor, needs, wars and social problems, (dukkhas) etc. That is reasonnowadays many people who are avaricious are trading in wrong livelihood and then there is not equal economic in each environment, society and country around the world. Ājivatthamaka sila is the refraining from wrong livelihood including unwholesome actions. It is also, thus, the foundation of peace for the world.

The Concepts of Ājivatthamaka Sila

Buddha’s lifetime, early Buddhists kept profoundly only Ājivatthamaka sila. That is why it corresponds to the morality group of the Noble Eightfold Path. Of these, refraining from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct are called Right Action (samma kammanta); refraining from lying, slandering, rude or harsh speech and vain talk or foolish babble are called Right Speech (samma vācā); refraining from wrong livelihood (micchājīva) is called Right Livelihood (samma jīva). The three constituents of the morality group, when considered in detail, become Ājivatthamaka sila.

Venerable Buddhaghosa, therefore, defined that Ājivatthamaka sila means “the Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth”. And then he revealed that Ājivatthamaka sila consists of eight numbers of discipline.

But many Pāli scholars do not accept about this definition. They think that Ājivatthamaka sila is connected with livelihood (ājīva). One who needs to trade, first, must think about business mentally how to do and then he or she will perform works physically or verbally. Therefore right livelihood (samma jīva) consists of the three mental wholesome actionssuch as absence of covetousness, goodwill and right view. In Tipitaka, we can see many suttas which the Buddha preached that one who performs ten types of evil conduct including taking intoxicants will be reborn in four realms of misery after death but one who keeps sila will be reborn in heaven and also can attain enlightenment.

Therefore, refraining from ten types of evil conduct is called Sucarita sila (good conduct morality). Besides that, it is also called Ājivatthamaka sila when refraining from them including taking intoxicants regarding livelihood.
Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sila of Bhuddhaghosa

In Buddhism, mainly there are of two kind: the Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila of Buddhaghosa and Catubhummika Nikāya. According to Buddhaghosa, Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila consists of eight numbers of discipline as follows:
1. Refraining from killing living beings.
2. Refraining from taking stealing other’s property.
3. Refraining from indulging in sexual misconduct.
4. Refraining from telling lies.
5. Refraining from slandering.
6. Refraining from rude or harsh speech.
7. Refraining from vain talk or foolish babble, and
8. Refraining from wrong livelihood.

Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sila of Catubhummika Nikāya

In Myanmar, there are nine sects (nikāyas) about Theravāda Buddhism after Sixth Buddhist Council. Of these, the Buddhists of Catubhummika Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Hngettwin Nikāya keep merely Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila which refrains from all evil conducts including taking intoxicants as follows:
1. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from killing living beings.
2. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from stealing other’s property.
3. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from indulging in sexual misconduct.
4. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from telling lies.
5. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from slandering.
6. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from rude or harsh speech.
7. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from vain talk or foolish babble.
8. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from covetousness.
9. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from ill-will.
10. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from wrong view.
11. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from wrong livelihood.
12. I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking intoxicants.

CONCLUSION

Sila is based on Hīri and Ottappa. Hīri means moral shame to do evils and Ottappa means moral fear to do evils. These two are called “Guarding Principles of the World” (lokapāla dhamma) because these are the refraining from immoral actions.

Actually, according to Buddhist Abhidhamma, all living beings are called Sattva but they are separated by their moral or immoral deeds that who are high or low beings. Human beings are kept with moral discipline (sila) by those two, Hīri and Ottappa and also are distinguished from animals. If, therefore, human beings never be ashamed and fear to do evils, they will sink into evil depths and then they will be reduced to the state of animals. After that, they will perform bullying like animals. If so, there will never become peaceful in the world.

Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila is separate from other silas. That is why it is based on equal opportunity of living beings, having control of avarice on trade. One who observes Ājīvaṭṭhamaka sila, automatically, is ashamed and fear to trade with avarice. Therefore he or she feels peaceful in mind and also there becomes peaceful in the world because of him or her. Soon or later, he or she will attain enlightenment (nibbāna). That is why his or her mind is very pure without defilements. It is the final goal of Buddhists.

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