



THE WAY OF ESCAPE FROM SUFFERING ON THE STAND POINTS OF ABHIDHAMMA

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ABSTRACT

This article mentions the way of escape from suffering (Dukkha) in accordance with Dependent Origination, Four Noble Truths and Conditional Relations as well, taught by the Buddha. Before preaching of the Buddha, People did not understand these matters aforesaid but the cause of suffering also. The people wrongly consider that only the problems of poor eating, wearing and living and so forth are serious cases for them but the births, the olds and the deaths and so on.



This is why none can achieve liberation from suffering the round of Births, Olds and Deaths, or Saṃsāra (the Cycle of Rebirth). After the Dhamma (teaching) of the Buddha, some people accepted these matters and realized that Nibbāna will never attain without practising Magga (Path) and Phala (Fruition). If we fail to achieve the ideal in the present life, our efforts would not be fruitless. Thus, this article that will contribute my thesis tries to cover all the factors that need for the escape by the three kinds of training which is the Middle Way, consists of Eightfold Noble Path to reach Nibbana, the extinction of suffering. Dependent Origination and Conditional Relations are also in the direction of the way to help us to escape from the suffering on the stand point of Abhidhamma¹.

KEYWORDS: *Suffering, Dependent Origination, Conditional Relations, Eightfold Paths, Four Noble Truth, Nibbhāna (bliss or peace).*

INTRODUCTION

Abhidhamma (Deeper teaching) is studied not only as a rational, comprehensible and applicable way of life but as an essential guide to the final emancipation. The principle objective of this research paper is to escape from the suffering. Research methods mainly applied here are Analytical method; Explanatory method; and Comparative method. Here, this paper, still in progress, may appear a bit narrow in scope as the data collection is focused only on few leading *Abhidhamma*.

¹In *Abhidhamm*, the *pāli* term 'Abhi' can define great, deeper mighty. *Abhidhamma* means the deeper Dhamma due to being an *Anatta* (Non-self), it is beyond anybody's control. That *Abhidhamma*, the last of *Tipitaka*, means "deeper Dhamma" in detail. It deal with ultimate or absolute realities, different from conventional truth. Ultimate reality (*ParamatthaDhamma*) can also be called *Abhidhamma*.

In *Abhidhamma*, the characteristics, feeling and consequences of these concepts are categorized in minute details. When we come to understand their nature and outcomes, we would try to cultivate the good habit of avoiding evil. Just as when we understand the risk of taking something poisonous which brings harm to us, we are supposed to avoid it. Thus, through the application of *Abhidhamma* knowledge in our daily life, we can live in accordance with the institutions of the Buddhas. In brief, *Abhidhamma* pinpoints us what we are and the nature of the world around us; how to live in the world peacefully and beneficially. These are just a few instances that highlight how *Abhidhamma* knowledge is essential for the better understanding of Buddha's teachings.

Science studies based on materiality but cannot understand *Kamma* (action) and its results. *Abhidhamma* can analyse all the natures of the natural world; *Kamma* and its results; the rounds of existence and can also bring the benefits for the welfare of the society and the world. We come to understand to control the mental states (*cetasikas*) which are leading the mind. Practice based on *Abhidhamma* knowledge produces peaceful mind as immediate effect.

Abhidhamma can guide us to correct path; our sensitive and aggressive mind becomes calmer than before: followers of any religions should know *Abhidhamma*. *Abhidhamma* has always developed our understanding of *Dhamma* and has always inspired to goal for the positive results. And we are always grateful to its clearness and realistic explanations that has changed the whole perspective of our life. *Abhidhamma* is like a mirror as it can see everything objectively; and also like a formula which can analyse mental and physical processes. Hence, this paper is attended to elucidate people including ourselves, to know how to escape from the suffering as soon as possible. The aim of this research paper is to enhance a clear comprehension to escape from the suffering on the fundamental principles from the stand point of *Abhidhamma*.

1. The Textual Study of Dependent Origination²

There are two ways to explain the causality: the way of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and the way of *Paṭṭāna*. *Paṭiccasamuppāda* means 'Dependent Origination (DO)' and *Paṭṭāna* means 'Conditional Relations'. In the way of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination), it explains the causality how the 2 states (cause) *paccaya* and (effect) *paccayuppanna* relate to each other, just as when this exists, that comes to be. The Dependent Origination is a central doctrine of Buddhism. It is indeed very deep and profound in its substance and aspects. The Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) is described under the topic of *Paccaya* Chapter in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. The Pāli term *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is a compound word of *Paṭicca* (dependent on) and *Samuppāda* (arising, origination). Concisely speaking, DO pinpoints cause and effect but nothing else. Let see this simple example. There is A & B. Because of A, B arises. A is the cause and B is the effect. If there is no A, there won't be B. That means if there is no cause, there won't be no effect. It also carries on B and C respectively cause and effect and so on. It is easy and rational law. This is characterized as "a simple happening of a state is dependence on some other state."

To illustrate the DO as 3 parts. The 1st part is textual study, the 2nd part is commentarial explanation and the 3rd part is the Methodology of DO and its applications. For the 1st part, textual study, it explains the circle of DO routes or the Wheel of Dhamma. In this route, there are two orders as the Normal Order (*Anuloma*) which is going round and round in rebirths (*Saṃsāra*) and the Reverse Order (*Paṭiloma*) that is cutting off the vicious circle (Enlightenment).

The Normal Order is starting as *avijjā* (ignorance) vs *saṅkhāra* (kamma-formation), *saṅkhāra* (kamma-formation) vs *viññānaṃ* (consciousness) and so on. Also the Reverse Order is *avijjānirodhāsaṅkhāranirodho* (because of cessation of ignorance, becoming the cessation of

²Kathāvatthu Pāli, Published in Yangon, Myanmar, 2000, p.240.
Atthakatha, Published in Yangon, Myanmar, 1999, pp.208-209.

kamma-formation), *saṅkhāranirodhāvīññānaṃnirodho* (because of cessation of kamma-formation, becoming the cessation of consciousness), and so forth.

This circle also should be understood that there are 8 categories such as: 2 main roots, 2 truths, 12 factors, 3 connections, 3 rounds, 3 periods, 4 groups and 20 modes.

1) 2 main roots are ignorance(*avijjā*) from the past to the present and craving(*taṇhā*) from the present to the future. They are placed at the centre of the circle of DO routes. So, by destruction of these 2 roots, the round becomes cease.

2) The 2 Truths are *SamudayaSaccā* and *DukkhaSaccā*. Herein, as we all know that there are 4 Noble Truths. But within the existence, we have to deal with only this *Samudaya* and *Dukkhasaccā*. Because we are still worldly beings and not yet Noble person. So we haven't got yet the other 2 noble truths which are *Nirodhasaccā* and *Maggasaccā*. That's why they are not shown in this circle.

3) 12 factors are *avijjāsaṅkhāra*, *viññāna*, *nāma-rūpa*, *salāyatana*, *phassa*, *vedanā*, *taṇhā*, *upādāna*, *kammabhava*, *jāti*, *jarā-marāṇa*. Between *jāti* and *jarā, marāṇa*, the other sufferings such as *soka*, *parideva*, *dukkha*, *domanassa*, *upayāsa* arise. Thus, the whole mass of sufferings arises.

4) 3 connections are *SaṅkhārapaccayāViññānaṃ* (kammic actions with rebirth-linking consc.) as 1st connection, *VedanāpaccayāTaṇhā* (feeling with craving) as 2nd and *KammabhavapaccayāJāti* (rebirth-producing *kamma* consc. with rebirth) as 3rd connection.

5) Three rounds are, ignorance, craving, clinging belong to the round of defilements (*Kilesavatta*). One part of existence known as kammic existence and kammic actions belong to the round of *kamma* (*Kammavatta*). One part of existence known as rebirth existence and the rest belong to the round of results (*Vipākavatta*).

6) 3 periods are ignorance and kammic action belong to the past, rebirth, decay-death belong to the future and the intermediate eight factors belong to the present period.

7) 4 groups are five causes pertaining to the past group and 5 effects to the present group, 5 causes pertaining to the present group and 5 effects to the future group.

8) 20 modes are: Past cause continuum pertaining *avijjā* (ignorance), *saṅkhāra* (kamma-formation), *taṇhā* (craving), *upādāna* (grasping), *kammabhava* (process of action);

Present effect-----*Viññāna* (consciousness), *Nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter), *Salāyatana* (six-bases), *Phassa* (impression), *Vedanā* (feeling) as 5 aggregates.

Present cause -----*Taṇhā* (craving), *Upādāna* (grasping), *kammabhava* (process of action), *Avijjā* (ignorance), *Saṅkhāra* (kamma-formation);

Future effect -----*Viññāna* (consciousness), *Nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter), *Salāyatana* (six-bases), *Phassa* (impression), *Vedanā* (feeling) as 5 aggregates. Thus, we got altogether 20 modes.

2. The First Sermon (*DhammacakkapavattanaSutta*)³

The First Sermon is greatly expounded by the Buddha after His Enlightenment, identified as the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths mean the Truths that we never heard before the Buddha appeared.

They are: The Truth of Suffering to know (*DukkhaSaccā*);

The Truth of the Origin of Suffering to eradicate (*SamudayaSaccā*);

The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering to realize (*NirodhaSaccā*);

The Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering to develop (Eight-fold Noble Path- Middle Way) (*Maggasacca*).

By avoiding the two extremes of Indulgence sensual pleasure (*Kāmasukhallikanuyoga*) and Self-torment (*Attakilamathānuyoga*) leads to Enlightenment and Deliverance from suffering are

³MahāvaggaPāḷi (SaṃyuttaNikāya), Published in Yangon, Myanmar, 1999, p.372.

designated as the Middle Way (*Majhimapaṭipadā*).“The Four Noble Truths can be compared to the hub of a wheel. As all the spokes of the wheel radiate from the hub, all Buddha’s teachings radiate from this sermon. In fact, the Four Noble Truths is nothing but a problem solving methodology in its most advanced, sophisticated and subtle form. It is also an expose of the four fundamental ethical principles.

3. The Second Noble Truth (*SamudayaSaccā*)

Among the Truths, Craving (*Taṇhā*) is the power mental force latent in all worldly beings as the great root cause of suffering and analysed as the Second Noble Truth. In Buddhist Philosophy and Psychology, craving denotes the causal genesis of suffering and the psychological aspect of entire human behaviour. It significantly includes all varieties of desire ranging from passionate desire or lust to subtle liking or affection of any kind.

Craving has the characteristic of being a cause (that is, of suffering). Its function is to delight. It is manifested as instability and proximate cause is feeling. We can discuss craving under three aspects such as craving for sensual pleasures (*kama-taṇhā*), existence(*bhava-taṇhā*) and non-existence (*vibhava-taṇhā*).Craving leads to the cycle of rebirths in continuity of suffering(*saṃsāra*). Buddhism recommended three different aspects of craving where the true cause of suffering lies. Craving is very closely related as it is to the concept of Dukkha, the first priority in the First Sermon of the Buddha’s teachings.

3. The Fourth Noble Truth (*MaggaSaccā*)

Craving can be coarse, medium, or subtle. Most people can recognize craving when it is very obvious, but not when it is of a lesser degree. Every time when there is a pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or delighted thought, craving is like to arise. It arises countless times a day with different facets which can be summarized into three kinds corresponding to three kinds of *kilesa*(defilement) in the following:

- (1) Craving that motivates physical and a verbal action is classified as *vitikkamakilesa* (transgression defilement),
- (2) Craving that excites the mind to revel in imagined delight and a fantasy is classified as *pariyuṭṭhānakilesa*(prepossession defilement),
- (3) The latent craving which is lying latent awaiting opportune moment to manifest itself is classified as *anusayakilesa* (proclivity defilement).

As there are three levels of craving corresponding to the three kinds of *kilesa*, the Buddha gave us three weapons to attack each level namely: *Sīla*, *Samadhi* and *Paññā*. These are actually the Eightfold Noble Path which is the Fourth Noble Truth (*Maggasaccā*), constitutes of Right View & Thinking are grouped into *Paññāsikkhā* (the training of wisdom), Right Speech-Action- Livelihood are grouped into *Sīlasikkhā* (the training of morality)and Right Effort-Mindfulness-Concentration are grouped into *Samadhi sikkhā* (the training of concentration).

Otherwise, about *Paṭṭhāna*(Conditional Relations), the Buddha engaged Himself in the deep reflection on the Conditional Relations (CR), after attaining the Buddha hood, during the fourth week of his seclusion. He spontaneously radiated six rays, without his conscious will to do so. The insight knowledge of CR pinpoints that all relevant causes and all relevant possible effects of a phenomena, is the greatest, the noblest and the most valuable type of knowledge. All-important teachings of the Buddha are based on causal analysis.Conditional Relations is the last or Seventh Book of Abhidhamma treatise and consists of twenty four conditions, the subject matter, which presents a detailed exposition of the various ways in which they inter-relate the mental and material

phenomena enumerated in *Dhammasaṅgani*.⁴The functions of these twenty four conditional relations are shown respectively as follows:

- A root condition supports the phenomena,
- An object condition stands for information,
- Predominance that predominates over the associated states,
- Proximity and contiguity precede a thought-moment without interval,
- Co-nascence makes the causes and effects simultaneous,
- Mutuality reciprocates with its conditional states,
- Dependence provides a support to the conditioned state;
- Strong dependence provides a very strong support to the conditioned state;
- Pre-nascence born earlier than its conditioned state;
- Post-nascence born later than its conditioned state;
- Repetition is for the arising of its conditioned state;
- Kamma* produces and stimulates its conditioned state;
- Resultant quietens its conditioned state;
- The relation of habitual recurrence;
- Nutriment means material (edible food) and immaterial (contact, motivator, consciousness), that can support physical activities and mental activities respectively,
- Faculty expresses attitude or ability to perform a particular job or activities, it has a specific characteristics and capability too,
- Jhāna* condition is a some kind of meditation to get deep concentration and it's indeed the development of enormous mental power,
- Path leads to the attainment of *Nibbāna*,
- Association with the conditioned state,
- Dissociation from the conditioned state,
- Presence for the conditioned states at the moment of existence,
- Absence for the conditioned states at the moment of non-existence,
- Disappearance for the conditioned states after having ceased,
- Non-Disappearance for the conditioned states before it ceases.

The nature of Path condition is a way to attain a happy outcome. A Path or highway leading to one's destination exemplifies the nature of Path Condition. In Conditional Relations, Path condition constitutes the twelve path factors. Among them, the four wrong path factors are the means for reaching the woeful destinations, the eight right path factors are the means for reaching the blissful destinations and Nibbana. The Eight Right Path factors are Right view-Thinking are grouped into *Paññāsikkhā* (the training of wisdom), Right Speech- Action-Livelihood are grouped into *Sīlasikkhā* (the training of morality) and Right Effort-Mindfulness-Concentration are grouped into *Samādhisikkhā* (the training of concentration) to be practised.

In whatever we do, there is a right way (*sammā-magga*) and there is untruth way (*micchā-magga*) to accomplish a solution to the problem. For an instance, the new Secretary-General of the United Nations mediates a cease-fire to a war between the two Member States. As a result, peace is restored between the two Member States. The new Secretary-General has the diplomatic skills to find a solution to the international problem. As Path condition or finding a solution to a problem is an all-pervading action in all our conscious and purposive activities. In Conditional Relations, Path condition relate to the associated consciousness, mental factors. Mind produced matter as well as resultant consciousness and *kamma*-produced matter by path condition. It should be noticed that there are no separate analytical states as wrong ways because the mindfulness by its very nature is

⁴ The "*Dhammasaṅgani*" is one of Buddhist Literatures, part of the *Pāli* canon of *Theravāda* Buddhism, where it is included in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*.

only moral 'kusala'. After knowing that, we have enough to try to escape from suffering by the way of Path Condition.

CONCLUSION

The benefit accruing from the Dependent Origination, Four Noble Truths and Conditional Relations is the way to escape from suffering. One cannot attain Enlightenment without having cultivated the right condition which is Path Condition. Only Buddha had accumulated such wisdom that He can find the Path by Himself, without the help of a teacher. Other people, however, need the teachings of the Buddha in order to find the right path, because ignorance has been accumulated for an endlessly long time. We need association with the right person, the good friend in Dhamma, who can point out to us the right path, because our defilements prevent us from finding the right path. We can find out through the practice too. We practise in the wrong way we may eventually find out that it does not lead to right understanding of the realities of our daily life.

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