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BUDDHIST CONCEPT ON FIRE OF LUST (*RĀGAGGI* OR *LOBA*)

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ABSTRACT

According to the Kamma of many previous, all livings have attractive and various Characteristics. Characteristics have not only animate beings but also inanimate beings. Both; Paramat̥ha (Realities) as well as Paññatti (Unrealities) have characteristics. These are different one another as characteristic. Some are good and some are bad; such as kind-hearted and unkind-hearted, good-natured and bad-natured, diligent and lazy, honest and dishonest, polite and impolite, pious and impious, pretty and ugly, justice and injustice, generous and mean and so on. 'Loba' greed has bad characteristic and it is very hot. As long as 'Loba' can not be abandoned, we have to face sufferings and our life is not peace. All sufferings in the world are based on greed (Loba). In this paper, we will see the ways to abandon greed (Loba).



KEY WORDS: Greed or Lust (*Loba*).

INTRODUCTION

Greed; liking, wishing, longing, fondness, affection, attachment, lust, cupidity, craving, passion, self-indulgence, possessiveness, avarice, desire for the wealth, offspring, fame, etc. Greed is too bad. People who has the characteristic of lust or greed (*Loba*) is dangerous. He uses terrible or evil ways to get money, gold, designation, etc.

This paper will tell about the fire of lust or greed (*Loba*), the characteristic of craving (*Loba*) and will show the ways to release from lust (*Loba*). In addition, we will know how to wipe out *Loba*- lust, greed.

Loba; Greed has the characteristic of gasping an object, like birdlime (lit- monkey lime). Its function is sticking, like meat put in hot pan. It is manifested as not giving up, like the dye of lamp-black. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to states of misery as a swift-flowing river does to the great ocean.

The fire is hot. There is no fire which is no hot. But everybody, uncontrolled own desire, does not know that "will greed and lust whether make me hot or not?" They can not content with just this and that. They, thus, committed many stupid mistakes.

For instance, "Formerly, the *Thullanandā* was the wife of a certain Brahmin and there were three daughters, *Nandā*, *Nandavatī*, *Sundarīnandā*. Then, that Brahmin, having passed away, was born in the womb of a certain goose and his feathers were made all of gold. He gave a feather one by one to those. Then, the old wife, saying; "this goose is giving us a feather one by one,' having taken hold of that king of the goose, plucked him.

His feathers, on growing again, turned out white. So at that time, the old wife lost the gold through too much greed. About that, the Buddha said –

Yaṃ laddhaṃ tena tutthabbaṃ, atilobo hi pāpako.

Haṃsarājaṃ gahetvāna, suvamnā parihāyatha. (Vin: 2.339)

“One should be pleased with what is received, for too much greed is bad. By taking hold of the king of the geese, one may lose the gold”. In fact, the fire of lust and greed is so much terrible.

Craving is the Main Cause of Suffering

According to the Noble Truth of Suffering, life is suffering and suffering is life. Here ‘life’ means the five aggregates of attachment and refers to a ‘being’. According to the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering, craving (*tanhā*) is taken as the main cause of suffering. ‘*Tanhā*’ and ‘*rāga*’ refers to the mental factor ‘*lobha*’. *Loba* has characteristics: ‘craving’ and ‘attachment’. As an ultimate reality, it never relinquishes these characteristics.

Craving craves for and attach to gold, money, wealth, property, luxury, official position, authority, sense objects, mind subjects, ideology, etc. so, it urges people to struggle in many ways to possess these things. Such struggle means suffering. If, in spite of hard struggle, people fail to get them, they are stricken with sorrow and grief. If they succeed in acquiring them, they have to worry for the safety of these things and guard them. This is also suffering. If, in spite of their effort to guard their possessions, these things are lost, they are in great despair.

The desire of greed or craving can never be satisfied. The more it gets, the more it wants. It is like drinking salty sea water: the more we drink, the thirstier we feel. When we put more fuel into it, the flame grows bigger; likewise, when we enjoy more sense pleasure, so too the sense desire grows stronger. To be always hungry and thirsty for sensuality is real suffering. For example, (Mehm Tin Mon 8).

A discontented monk desired to leave the Order, hoping to live on the meager possessions left by his father. The Buddha explained that no satisfaction can arise in sense-desires as follow.

“Monk, the pieces of money which you possess are but few in number. How can you hope to satisfy your desire with so few as these? In times past lived men who exercised sways as Universal Monarchs, men who by a mere waving of the arms were able to cause a rain of jewels to fall, covering the ground for twelve leagues waist-deep with jewels; these men ruled as kings until Thirty-six *Sakkas* had died; and although exercising sovereignty over the gods for so long, died, when they did die, without having fulfilled their desires.”

Na kahāpanavassena, titti kāmesu vijjati

Appasādā dhukā kāmā, iti viññāya pandito

Apidibbesu kāmesu, ratiṃ so nādhigacchati

Tanhakkhayarato hoti, sammāsambuddhasāvako. (Dhp: Verse-186, 7)

Not by a shower of gold coins does contentment arise in sensual pleasures. Of little sweetness, and painful, are sensual pleasures. Knowing thus, the wise man finds no delight even in heavenly pleasures. The disciple of the Fully Enlightened One delights in the destruction of craving. (Nārada Thera 167, 2000)

Because of dissatisfaction and selfish desire, people commit theft, robbery, rob, and quarrel, and would cause many unpleasant things, even world wars. Thus, greed or craving causes so many sufferings in the present life. It will produce evil consequence in the future life also.

Attachment is the Cause of Suffering

The second characteristic of greed or craving is attachment, which is the cause of all suffering. The nature of attachment of greed is described In *Abhidhmmā* with the example of the monkey-catching or birdlime.

People are firmly attached to their wives, husbands, sons, daughters, and cars, and so on, with craving. So they are bound to these things with the ropes or fetters of craving. They can not escape from this bondage. Because of this strong bondage, they can not go to meditation centers to meditate for a

long time. So they can not escape from the round of rebirth and have to drift along in *saṃsāra*. (Mehm Tin Mom 89)

When one of our beloved ones falls seriously ill or suffers great pain, we also feel very worried and sad. If that person dies, we inconsolably weep, lament and grieve over the death of that person. This great suffering obviously arises out of attachment to that person, for we feel indifferent, when we hear the illness and death of unknown people.

Visākhā of Sāvatti, who was a stream winner (*sotāpanna*), had 20 sons and daughters, 400 grandchildren and 8000 great grandchildren. One day she came to the Buddha at noon with her hair and clothes wet with water. She said that she came back from the cemetery for the funeral of one of her beloved grandchildren and that she could not console herself for the great loss.

When the Buddha asked her if she knew the reason for her great despair, she admitted that she did not know. The Buddha pointed out that it was due to the attachment to her dead child. (Ud: 190)

In the world, many heart-broken lovers are laid in bed without any appetite to eat or drink. Some commit suicide. Some people who are financially ruined also commit suicide. How great is suffering caused by the attachment due to greed or craving in this very life!

Tanhāya jāyatī soko, tanhāya jāyatī bhayam.

Tanhāya vip̐pamuttassa, natthi soko kutobhayam. (Dhp: Verse-216)

From craving springs grief; from craving springs fear; For him who is wholly free from craving; There is no grief, much less fear.

Craving and attachment are the most powerful force causing not only various forms of suffering in this very life, but also the continuation of existence. It builds and rebuilds new existences over and over again. Life depends on the desire and craving for life. “*Natthi rāgasamo aggi*” (Dhp: Verse-202) “There is no fire like lust”. Craving and lust is, indeed, the hottest fire that is burning all worldliness.

Impermanence; liberation from lust

The fact of impermanence; “*Vayadhamā sarīkhāra, appāmādena saṃpādettha*” (D: 2. 128) Impermanent, subject to change, are component things. Strive on with mindfulness! This was final admonition of the Buddha to his disciples. And when the Buddha had passed away, *Sakka*, the chief of the deities, uttered the following:

Aniccā vata sankhārā-uppādavayadhammino,

Uppajjavā nirujjhanti-tesaṃvūpasamosukho. (D: 2.129, Ja: 1.22)

“Impermanent are all component things, they arise and cease, that is their nature: they come into being and pass away, Release from them is bliss supreme.”

Even up to present times, at every Buddhist funeral, in Theravada countries, this *Pāli* verse is recited by the Buddhist monks who perform the obsequies, thus reminding the congregation of the evanescent nature of life.

It is a common sight in Buddhist lands to see the devotees offer flowers and light oil lamps before a Buddha image. They are not praying to the Buddha or to any ‘supernatural being’. The flowers that fade and the flames that die down, speak to them of the impermanency of all conditioned things.

Change or impermanence is the essential characteristic of all phenomenal existence. We can not say of anything, animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, ‘this is lasting’; for even while we are saying this, it would be undergoing change. All is fleeting; the beauty of flowers, the bird’s melody, the bee’s hum, and a sunset’s glory. (Piyadassī Thera 1, 2, 3, 1981)

Everything is impermanent:

Buddha :Bhikkhus, what do you think? Is material for (*rūpa*) permanent or Impermanent?

Bhikkhus :Impermanent, Venerable Sir.

Buddha :Is what is impermanent suffering (*dukkha*) or happiness (*sukha*)?

Bhikkhus :Suffering, Venerable Sir.

Buddha :Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded: “This is mine’, (*etam mama*) “This I am’, (*esoha’masamī*), “This is my self’ (soul), (*eso me attā*).

- Bhikkhus** :No, Venerable Sir.
Buddha :How about the other four aggregates (*khandhā*) namely, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formation (*sankhāra*), and conscious (*viññāna*)? Aren't they also impermanent, suffering and subject to change?
Bhikkhus :They are Venerable Sir.
Buddha :Are they fit to be regarded as 'This is mine', 'This I am', 'This is my self' (soul)?
Bhikkhus :No, Venerable Sir.
Buddha :You are right, bhikkhus. All aggregates should be seen as actually they are with proper wisdom thus: 'This is not mine; this I am not, this is not I (myself).
Bhikkhus :Yes, we do understand, Venerable Sir.
Buddha :Seeing thus bhikkhus, a well taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with the five aggregates (*pañcakkhadhā*); being disenchanted he becomes dispassionate, and through dispassion his mind is liberated; in liberation the knowledge comes to be that 'It is liberated'. He understands: 'Birth is destroyed, holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being'. (Vin: 3.19)

Patācārā and impermanence

Patācārā, lost her husband, her children, her parents and her only brother under tragic circumstance. The Buddha comforted her and she became a nun. One day, while she was washing her feet, she noticed how the water flowed away in three stages – Some drop of water flowed and subsided close to her, some farther away from her, some still farther away from her. This induced her to meditate on the transience of life, of which she had personal experience. The Buddha saw her with His Divine Eye and projecting Himself before her, uttered this stanza.

Yo ca vassasataṃ jīve, apassaṃ udayavyayaṃ.

Ekahaṃ jīvitaṃ seyo, passato udayavyayaṃ. (Dhp: Verse-113)

Though one should live a hundred years without comprehending how all things rise and pass a way, yet better, indeed, is a single day's life of one who comprehends how all things rise and pass away. (Nārada Thera 106, 2000)

Having realized the nature of impermanence, she has no all attachment including lust. Soon she attained Arahantship. All condition things are impermanence! Thus, the fire of lust was quenched by impermanence.

The young monk and impermanence

A young monk was meditating on the impurities of the body but with no effect, so Venerable Sāriputta took him to the Buddha and related everything about the young monk. The Buddha, perceiving his disposition, changed the subject of meditation for the young monk. The Buddha gave him a lotus flower as a focus for mental concentration. He progressed until he reached as far as the fourth level of mental absorption (*jhāna*).

The Buddha, with his supernormal power, made the flower wither instantly. Seeing the flower wither and change its colour, the monk perceived the impermanent nature of the flower and of all other things and beings. That led to the realization of the impermanence of all conditioned things. Later, the young attained Arahantship. (DhpA: 2.267)

Princess Janapadakalayānī and impermanence

Princess Janapadakalayānī was the daughter-in-law of Gotamī, because she was very beautiful, she was also known as Rupanandā. She had become a nun but lacked faith. Rupanandā had heard from others that the Buddha often taught that impermanence of the aggregate (*Kharīdhā*), fearing that the Buddha would speak depreciatingly of her beauty, she would not visit the Buddha. One day, when she came to the preaching hall with the others, the Buddha conjured the vision of a beautiful woman, fanning Him. The Buddha, then, caused the vision to change gradually, reflecting the ravages wrought by old age and death. She came to perceive the true nature of the aggregates.

At this point, the Buddha talked about the impermanence of the five kinds of aggregates, and Rupanandā attained *Sotāpatti* fruition. (DhpA: 2.73)

The aggregates of mind and body being ever subject to cause and effect, as we sew, pass through the inconceivably rapid moments of arising, presently existing and ceasing (*uppāda, thiti, bhaṅga*), just as the unending waves of the sea or as a river in flood sweeps to a climax and subsides. Indeed, human life is compared to a mountain stream that flows and rushes changing incessantly (A: 2.137) '*naḍīsoto vija,*' like a flowing stream. (Piyadassī Thera 7, 1981)

Further says the Buddha: 'Impermanent, monks, are pleasures of the senses, empty, false, unreal; this prattle of fools is made of illusion...Here these evil unwholesome thoughts lead to covetousness, ill-will and quarrels. (M: 3 .106, Piyadassī Thera 110, 1987)

CONCLUSION

Greed (lust) is desire and is the root of all miseries. Greedy does not want to offer possessions and wherewithal to other person. Impermanence is the opposite of greed. The nature of impermanence is undesired. It is the root of realization of the Path. One who penetrate that all conditioned things are impermanence can liberate from the fire of greed (lust).

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