

THE ESSENCE IN **BUDDHA'S TEACHING**



By
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What is Buddhism and Buddhists ?

The label 'Buddhism' was attached only afterwards, and it is the same with Christianity and any other as world religion. None of the great religious teachers ever gave a name to their teachings; they just went on teachings throughout their lives about how we should live in peace and mutual understanding. Although we claim ourselves as Buddhists, we mostly have not yet attained the truth. We are too much attached to the word 'Buddhism' and are aware of only tiny aspect of Buddhism, its outer covering which makes us think it is different from this or that. Outsiders are not part of our fellowship; they are wrong, only we are right, and so on and so forth.

This kind of view is not only with Buddhists but with all followers of major religion in the world. This shows how stupid and foolish we are! We are just like little babies who know only their own belief. When you tell a small child to go and take a bath and to wash with soap to get all the dirt off, he will scrub only his belly; he does not know how to wash all over. He will never think of washing behind his ears or between his toes or anywhere like that. He only scrubs and polishes his stomach vigorously. In just the same way, most of the so-called religious person knows only a few things such as intending to get and intending to take. In this case it will be more accurate to say that those people know nothing at all, for they are acquainted only with how to get and how to take. That is not a religion. If anything at all, it is the religion of getting, the religion of taking. If they

cannot get or cannot take something, they are frustrated and suffered. Real religious is to know how to get without getting, and take without taking so that there is no frustration and no suffering at all.

Non Attachment & Voidness

This must be spoken about very often to acquaint one with the heart of religion. In Buddhism, it calls non-attachment –not to try to grasp or cling to anything, nor even to the teaching itself, until finally it is seen that there is no Buddhism. That means, if we speak straight, that there is no Buddha, no Dhamma, no Sangha! However, it is expressed in this way, nobody will understand it. They will be shocked and frightened instead. If people understood in ultimate sense, they would see that the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha are the same. They would see them as being real nature or something like that. They would not grasp or hang on to it as that particular thing or this particular idea; it is, but is not individualized. As a matter of fact, most people think that there is happiness and suffering. However, if it is expressed in the ultimate sense, there is nothing, nothing to get, nothing to have, nothing to be –no happiness, no suffering, nothing at all ! and this is called ‘being void’. Everything still exists, but all awareness of them in terms of ‘I’ or ‘Mine’ is voided. For this reason we say it is a ‘void’.

To see everything as void is to see it as not being an aspect of oneself, or in any way possessed by one self. The word ‘void’ in the common language of people means nothing exists, but in the language of

the Buddha, the Enlightened One, means everything exists, but there nothing to be thought of as 'I' and nothing to feel attached to as 'Mine'.

Where can suffering take place? Suffering must happen to an 'I' –so you see, possessing 'I and 'mine' is the real cause of suffering. Pull out the root; that is the real cure; do not just be engaged in a futile search for bits and pieces of happiness to smooth it over and cover it.

What is Happiness?

As for happiness, as soon as you cling to it and have attachment for it, it becomes unhappiness, one more way to suffer. Most people always have attachment in one form or another to everything that is or is not. As a result, desirable things are all converted into causes of suffering. Good is also transformed into suffering. Praise, fame, honour and the like are all turned into forms of suffering as soon as you try to seize and hang on to them. All becomes unsatisfactory because of grasping and clinging. When you are wise enough to be detached from any forms of dualism, then you will no longer have to suffer because of those things. Many people's detachment appears to be a negative state, but in fact it is attachment that is negative. Why? Because when you are attached to something, the mind is really in a negative state of not wanting to understand reality. It wishes to hold on to possessions or qualities. This is not creative, but when you are detached, especially from pleasant or unpleasant feelings and from all active states of mind, you are truly creative because you understand what to do and how to do it. This is a clarity of understanding.

A detached mind, born of understanding reality in which there is full

capacity to do, is a creative mind. It is a free and can work correctly. The attached mind brings trouble to yourself as well as to others, and is a harmful thing, whereas detachment can harm on one –the mind is liberated and free from all conditions. The Buddha said; ‘of all conditioned a non-conditioned things ‘DETACHMENT’ is the best. Try to do things with a detached, free mind and you will see whether you are creative or not. To work with the acquisitive mind is very different from working with the detached mind. If you do not get what you want you need not lose your mental balance. You need not become a victim of what you want to get. You can remain calm, peaceful and steady. This inner equilibrium is the most positive state and through it we can live happily. Do not worry about achieving things. If you have detachment – liberation within – everything can be achieved. It is not a state of laziness, in which nothing can be done, but a profoundly creative state in which everything can be done. So, try to be detached, and work with a detached mind, you will finally come to the real state of awakening.

Suppose we shall speak of Mr. A, we tend to mean the whole of his body; we do not speak of only his eyes, ears, nose, tongue as Mr. A. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue are not Mr. A. It refers to the whole of his body. The word which is called ‘Mr. A’ is only conventional truth. It is not absolute Truth: there is no real self existing in him. He is so-called for the sake of remembering him as Mr. A. Others are also referred to in the same way. In consequence of the conventional truth we can understand the names of everything in the world correctly, such as ‘this is a giraffe, this is a cat, this is Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, and this is a pen and a pencil’ and so

on. According to Buddhism, a person is a combination of five aggregates.

Without conventional truth, however, we cannot recognize the names of anything in the present. It is necessary. But these things mentioned are conditioned to impermanent, suffering and non-self in the Absolute Truth. They are endlessly changeable. Having learnt and understood the five aggregates, one does not cling to them and is able to relinquish wrong understanding, Eternity Belief and Annihilation View. Thus, during meditation time we are taught not to think about and brood over the past and future. This is to direct our minds to what we desire and that is the breathing in and the breathing out via the nostrils and then our minds will go deeper and deeper until the Three Signs of Being, that is to say, Impermanence, Suffering and Soullessness, are clarified.

Realization of Truth

In the practice of insight meditation one has to learn ‘Five Aggregates’, which called *Nama-Rupa* as a nature of change, causes suffering and non-self. *Nama*, simply a mind, a Buddhist terminology refers to Feeling, Perception, Volitional Activity and Consciousness, which help to perceive or know whereas *Rupa*, simply matter, refers to a Form, the material substance which has no ability to perceive or to know anything at all and it comprises the Four Primary Elements, namely, the element of earth, water, air and fire. These are elements of which the body (form) is formed.

Nama-Rupa or mind and matter is impermanence. It is a nature to change, suffering and non-self because it is conditioned to arises, stabilizes

and passes away. So this is very important for meditators who practice insight meditation to understand the arising, stabilizing and passing away of it as they are. In the Path of Purity, it has been stated that it is in the form of impermanence, suffering and non-self because of the following conditions:

A. Impermanence because of four conditions:

1. **Udayavayanto** – arising and disappearing
2. **Viparinamato** – changing
3. **Tavakalikato** – being temporary like thing which is lent.
4. **Niccapatipakkhato** – in opposition to permanence.

B. Suffering because of four conditions:

1. **Abhinhasanpilato** – frequently making one suffer.
2. **Dukkhakhamato** –difficult to maintain.
3. **Dukkhavatthuto** – the source of which suffering is born.
4. **Sukhatipakkhato** –in opposition to happiness.

C. Non-self because of four conditions:

1. **Sunnato** – absence of self.
2. **Asamikato** – cannot be conquered.
3. **Akamakariyato** – cannot be forced to be this or that.
4. **Attapatipakkhato** – in opposition to self.

The meditators have to practice diligently and regularly until they can see impermanence, suffering and Non-self of Nama-rupa with clear wisdom. But to see Impermanence of Nama-Rupa is very difficult because it is hidden by *Santati*, the continuity of life. For example one experiences the growth of physical body from body-hood to childhood, from childhood

to adolescence, from adolescence to adult, from adult to old age and decay. Such a process is manifested in the form of continuation and changing. But nevertheless when the arising, stabilizing and passing away of Nama-Rupa are grasped and realized by insight-wisdom. The Impermanence will spontaneously appear to be seen at once.

Secondly, Suffering is hidden by (*Iriyapatha*) posture of standing, walking, sitting, sleeping, eating, drinking, walking, speaking, thinking and so on. These postures prevent one from seeing the sign of change that causes suffering. But when one attends to the repeated oppression and removes the postures and then suffering appears as it is.

Lastly, Non-self is hidden by *Ghana*, massiveness. Ghanasanna, the idea of massiveness of the five aggregates which consist of the form, sensation, perception, volitional activity and consciousness one attached to the five aggregates and tends to hold on to them as self. Therefore, as long as the five aggregates cannot be grasped and broken by means of Vipassana practice, the characteristic of non-self will not appear. When the five aggregates are grasped and realized by Vipassana panna, wisdom being born of Vipassana practice, then the characteristic of Non-self appears as it really is.

During the course of meditation practice, if these three signs of being, Impermanence, Suffering and Non-self appear to the meditators simultaneously, they are said to realize the condition of emptiness, deliverance or ultimate happiness of nibbana. It is described in three *Nibbanas*, namely; *Sunnatavimokkha* signifies *Nibbana* which is characterized by the condition of Emptiness, *Animittavimokkha* by the

condition or having no sign and *appanihitavimokkha* by the condition of having no sign and *appanihitavimokkha* by having no foundation.

According to the commentary it is explained that Deliverance is endowed with the condition of Emptiness because it is empty of Greed, Hatred and Delusion. It has no sign because there is no trace of those three passions and no foundation because it does not contain the foundation or support for such those three passion to exist.

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After WWII moved to Bangkok for Buddhist studies at Wat Tasnarunsuntarikama temple.

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- 1975 Co-operate to set up the Buddhist Union of Europe in Paris and a spiritual adviser in 1980.
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Literature:

- 1977 : A French Story 'La Fuite' Translated into Thai
- 1982 : Romanization of Pali Chanting Book & published in 1995 by Wat Sanghathan (Wat Santiwonsaram), Birmingham
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- 2009 : Article collection 'Odds and Ends' Compiled & Published by Ven. S. M. Sujano

Nimittam sadhurupanam katannukatavedita

A Gratitude or mindfulness of the benefit done by someone is a character of the virtuous.

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