

Extended Abstract

Psychological Value of Declaration (*ārocanā*) and Confession (*pāpadesanā*) in Buddhism

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1. Abstract

In Theravada Buddhism every higher ordained monk should have to declare the offences made by him in front of the other higher ordained monk on full moon poyaday. This action is named as *ārocanā* which means declaration. It is not only declaration but also acceptance it as an offence. In Mahayana Buddhism everyone has the thought of enlightenment (*Bodhicitta*), but it is sleeping. To wake it up, eight preliminary devotional practices (*anuttarapūjā*) should have been fulfilled. The forth is confession of sins (*pāpadesanā*) in front of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Even though they are two religious activities in two Buddhist traditions, the purpose of the activity is same to support final goal of Buddhism. Psychological value of these activities is very high. If the human beings of the society are ready to accept their unrighteous activities as offences, it helps to make the righteous society. And also that acceptance is a great human quality. With this quality unrighteous activities in the society can be controlled as well as it helps a lot to rehabilitate this society.

Keywords: Buddhism, Confession, Declaration, Psychological Value.

2. Introduction and Research Problem

There are three types of Buddhist disciplinary rules named as *chedyagāmiṇī* (offences of destructing the Monkhood), *uṭṭhānagāmiṇī* (offences of raising the monkhood again by practicing various activities) and *desanāgāmiṇī* (offences of purifying the monkhood by declaring it to others). With reference to the *uposathakkhandaka* of *Mahavaggapali*, before starting the *uposatha kamma* each and every higher ordained monk should have to fulfil another *kamma* which is named as *āpatti desanā* (declaring the offences made by him) in front of the other monk. This religious practice is named as *ārocanā* which means declaration. It is not only deceleration but also acceptance it as an offence.

Attaining Enlightenment is the ultimate goal of Mahayana Buddhists. With reference to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* everyone has the thought of enlightenment (*Bodhicitta*), but it is sleeping. To wake it up, eight preliminary devotional practices (*anuttarapūjā*) should have been fulfilled. The forth is confession of sins (*pāpadesanā*) in front of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. This practice is clearly elaborated in the 2nd chapter of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* as follow. Whatever evil, on the endless wheel of rebirth or simply right here, whatever evil was committed by me, an animal, or caused to be committed and whatever was enjoyed foolishly, ending in self-destruction, that evil I confess, stricken with remorseful feeling.

Even though in Mahayana Buddhism both lay and clergy can practice declaration in day to day life to wake up the thought of enlightenment, no place for lay followers in Theravada tradition. The problem of this research is how far the Theravada concept of confession can be applied to solve the social issues depicted in current society.

3. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research based on literature. Therefore, information has been collected from the primary sources in Buddhism and the relevant secondary sources and articles related to the field.

4. Discussion

In relation to the *Nibbedika* sutta of *Anguttaranikāya* intention is named as the action. "Intention, I tell you, is *kamma*. Intending, one does *kamma* by way of body, speech, & intellect. Therefore, we have to pay much attention on the mind than the action when we engage any activity. *Bāla vagga* of *Dhammapada* explain the role of mind. That deed is not well done, if one has to repent for having done it, and if, with a tearful face, one has to weep as a result of that deed. That deed is well done if one has not to repent for having done it, and if one is delightful and happy with the result of that deed. With reference to the *Vanaropa sutta* of *Samyuktanikaya* there are a few activities that merit grows. It is clearly mention in the *sutta* as follow. They who plant orchards and gardens, who plant groves, who build bridges, who set up sheds by the roadside with drinking water for the travellers, who sink wells or build reservoirs, who put up various forms of shelter for the public, are those in whom merit grows by day and by night. The reason behind this is the reflection. Whatever we reflect again it grows whether it is either merits or demerits. As a result of confession de-meritorious activities can be wiped out. It helps to stop the growth of demerits.

5. Conclusion

Psychological value of declaration and confession is significant. If the human beings are ready to accept their unrighteous activities as offences, it helps to make the righteous society. And also that acceptance is a great human quality. With this quality unrighteous activities in the society can be controlled as well as it helps a lot to rehabilitate this society.

6. Reference

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