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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAHMACARIYA IN SEEKING LIBERATION

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This research examines the concept and practice of *brahmacariya* in *Theravāda* Buddhism. *Brahamacariya* means good and moral living; higher religious life in taming the body, mind, and thoughts. The opposite of *brahmacariya* is *abrahamcariya* (immoral living) and *kāmesumicchācāra* (sexual misconduct). People indulged in *kāmesumicchācāra* and *abrahamcariya* create many social problems and violate moral ethics. To solve this problem, *kāmesumicchācāra* and *abrahamcariya* must be avoided. Abstaining from *kāmesumicchācāra* is refraining from sexual misconduct with other wives, sons, and daughters; but in a legal marriage, there can be sex between the husband and wife. *Abrahamcariya* means to refrain from sexual misconduct in not only molesting children and wives of others, but also one's own spouse. Avoiding *abrahamcariya* in the whole life without marriage is recognised as *komāribrahmacariya*. The *Dhammika Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* suggests that one should refrain from sexual intercourse. Inciting, approving, and praising wrongdoers should also be avoided. Although others shall perform *abrahamcārī*, we shall cultivate *brahmacārī*. In Buddhist monastic life, monks must constantly refrain from the act of sexual intercourse (*methūnadhamma*), as described in the *Pārājika pāli*. If *methūnadhamma* is engaged, the status of monkhood could be lost. Hence, to be *brahmacārī* and cultivate good moralities, the avoidances of *kāmesumicchācāra* and *abrahamcariya* are indispensable. Besides, according to the *Brahmacariya Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, *brahmacariya* is not practised for the welfare of deceiving people (*na janakuhanattham*), but for eradicating defilements. The mode of *brahmacariya* also involves noble search (*ariyā-pariyesanā*). Bodhisatta and noble seekers renounced their wealth, became hermits or monks, and followed *brahmacariya* practice for liberation from *dukkha*. Threefold training: morality, concentration, and wisdom are recognised as *brahmacariya-dhamma*. Buddha's disciples are encouraged to follow *brahmacariya* practice for eliminating lust, hatred, and delusion. Accordingly, we could say that the practice of *brahmacariya* is important for a seeker who is searching for liberation. This noble practice is undoubtedly the ideal religious life and Buddhist way towards the cessation of *dukkha*.

Keywords: *Brahmacariya*, *Theravāda* Buddhism, Noble seeker, Liberation
