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THE CONCEPT OF CANKERS (ÆSAVAS) IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract:-- Canker (Æsava) seems in several phases. Since the æsavas are represented as health problem (rogæ) and insalubrious (akusala), they're factors that ought to be abandoned. Cankers (Æsavas) are abandoned through the Noble Path.

In the Sabbæsavasutta æsava is outlined not solely in an exceedingly slender sense of individual I-ness however additionally in an exceedingly broad sense of all the troubles of individual. within the Sabbæsavasutta (M I 6-10) seven ways that of abandoning of æsavas are described: one. Cankers (Æsavas) to be abandoned by seeing (âsava dassanâ pahâtabbâ) a pair of. Cankers (Æsavas) to be abandoned by restraining (âsava sa? varâ pahâtabbâ) three. Cankers (Æsavas) to be abandoned by exploitation (âsava pa?isevanâ pahâtabbâ) four. Cankers (Æsavas) to be abandoned by enduring (âsava adhvâsanâ pahâtabbâ) five. Cankers (Æsavas) to be abandoned by avoiding (âsava parivajjanâ pahâtabbâ) six.

Cankers (Æsavas) to be removing (âsava vinodanâ pahâtabbâ) seven.
Cankers (Æsavas) to be abandoned by developing (âsava bhâvanæ pahâtabbâ)

Keywords:philosophy, religion, ethic, spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings in the world today have made enormous progress in scientific knowledge. They have increased their knowledge about the nature of their own physical existence and the nature of their physical environment. With this increased theoretical knowledge, their technological capabilities to control and manipulate the physical environment are increased correspondingly. There is no doubt that we are making rapid and ongoing progress in the areas of scientific knowledge and technological skill.

However, reflection on another aspect of our temporary situation makes it evident that no corresponding progress has been achieved in practical wisdom. The horrendous sufferings inflicted on human beings inhabiting this planet by fellow human beings, with their advanced scientific and technological skills, far exceed the sufferings brought about by natural disasters.

According to Buddhism, society can never be totally free of immorality and the resulting tensions and conflict, for the predominant factors that generally govern human behavior, untutored by spiritual nurture and impelled purely by the baser instincts human nature, are greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and confusion (*moha*). Buddhism considers these three psychological dispositions to be the roots of evil and human misery. Scientific progress has not made it possible for humanity to overcome these roots. Consequently, we are placed in a more precarious predicament when the discoveries and inventions based on our own intelligence threaten us with destruction.

The Buddha taught two main teachings: suffering and the cessation of suffering. It is said that ordinary beings (*puthujjana*), including beings in hell, animals, ghosts, humans, and celestial beings, wander about in the beginningless cycle of rebirth (*sa?sâra*) and are all subject to suffering (*dukkha*)—suffering of birth, aging, illness,

death, union with what is displeasing, separation from what is pleasing, not having what one wants, and the suffering intrinsic to the five aggregates. These beings do not realize by themselves the "four noble truths" (*ariyasacca*) as they really are and therefore are filled with and tortured by such mental defilements as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

In order to be free from saṁsāra and the suffering it entails, beings are instructed to devote themselves to Buddhist practice (*paṭipatti*), which comprises three kinds of training (*sikkhā*): morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

Among these three, morality in speech and bodily behavior is a basis for mental concentration, as only when immoral behavior is absent can one establish good concentration and a peaceful mind. Concentration is in turn a proximate cause of wisdom, as by means of which alone, one penetrates into the ultimate truths and is capable of eradicating one's latent mental defilements and therefore the mass of suffering.

In the section the Buddha addressed seven ways of overcoming cankers (Āsava) to the monks as follows:

DEFINITION OF CANKERS (ĀSAVAS)

The term āsava derives from *æ+sru*, *sravati* = to flow, the prefix *æ* - in the sense of beginning or coming, giving it the sense of 'coming to flow.' The meaning of the Sanskrit term *āsrava* is distress, affliction, and pain, in the sense of deterioration (SED). This term is used in Pāli both in an ordinary sense as well as in a religious technical sense. When used in the ordinary sense it means the intoxicating extract or secretion of a tree or flower (*merayo nāma pupphāsavō phalāsavō madhāsavō gulāsavō sambhārasamyutto*), and therefore, any spirituous liquor (CPD). Sometimes the term is used to refer to a discharge from a soul. Herein however the focus is in its use as a religious technical term. Used as such, it denotes defilement that keeps the mind bound to dukkha or samsāric existence and, hence, the release of the mind from āsava is considered as the freedom from samsāric dukkha. This term is used by the Buddha as one having to do with the core of his teaching. Its technical usage is not confined to Buddhism, for Jainism also uses the word 'āsava' to denote the influx of karma practices into the soul (Jōva). For Jains it is the action of the senses which impels the soul towards external objects (one of the seven Sattvas or substance: SED). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the term 'āsava' is adapted by the Buddha as a religious and technical term from the common Sramaṇa religious vocabulary. It is not used in this sense in the Bramanic religious tradition.

Even though 'āsava' is a key-term used by the Buddha himself in presenting his ethical and psychological teachings, it appears that the real significance of the term has been fully understood by researchers up to now. Though the etymological meaning is clear, it is difficult to render it into English to bring out its exact psychological import. Hence, the term has been rendered into English in varied ways. Some of the renderings are: influx (Ñtl), cankers (Ñm, Horner, Chalmers, Jayawickrama.), depravity (E. J. Thomas, Warren), enslaving principles (Judson), taint (Bhikkhu Bodhi), affliction, evil (influence), pain, misery, (CPD), corruption, intoxicants, biases (BD), and so on. Among them the term 'influx' is etymologically the closest in meaning to āsava. Commentarial explanations show that the ordinary meaning of the term namely, spirituous liquor appears to have contributed to the development of its religious technical meaning, for like spirituous liquor, āsava, in the sense of defilement influxes, are also kept for a long time. The other meaning namely, pus or discharge from a sore seems to have prompted writers to prefer such renderings as affliction and canker. What is clear from the above is that the term āsava is used as the origin of all defilements. It is cankerous, for it severely afflicts the mind; and it is like spirituous liquor, for it intoxicates and muddles the mind.

ABANDONMENT OF CANKERS (ĀSAVAS)

In Our daily life we always encounter āsavas. There are many ways of destruction in Pataka to overcome āsavas. The Buddha preaches these seven ways of abandoning for the restraint (*samvara*) of all āsavas. The stream of āsava is restrained by mindfulness (*sati*), and finally is blocked by *paññā*.

Thus, mindfulness is to restrain āsava and to cause arising of paññā: Whatever streams there are in the world, Mindfulness is their obstruction, I speak of the restraining of the streams and by wisdom would they be shut off. (Yāni sotāni lokasmim sati tesam nōvarānam Sotānam samvaram br̥pmi, paññy ete pithiyyare) These making use of the practice of the Noble path: signifies that there are āsavas sammādiñhi, right view. In the world 'diñhi' arises internally and externally when the nature is seen by perverted perceptions (saññāvipallāsa). The perverted perceptions should be abandoned by right view (sammādiñhi). seven ways of paññā (paññāpahātabbā) signifies that there are āsavas sammāsatī, right mindfulness. It should be known that restraint means restraint of mindfulness.

It is confirmed by the explanation of the commentary: imesu chasu dvāresu cattāro cattāro katvā catuvōsati āsava samvarena pahātabbāti vuccanti. Sabbatth eva ettha sati-samvaro eva samvaro ti veditabbo.' signifies that there are āsava sammā-ājīva, the right mode of living: miccha-ajivam pahaya sammā-ājīvena jōvitam kappeti. Living in this world one has to use the requisites as a bhikkhu who aims at reaching the goal. When he uses his requisites āsavas can arise. Hence he should maintain the life in a proper mode. This shows that the very adherence to the proper mode of life by way of using requisites in the right manner helps to abandon āsavas. signifies that there are āsavas sammāvāyama, the right effort. A bhikkhu does not tremble as a weak man trembles even with a slightest cold; he does not shake, does not give up meditation because of the power of his endeavoring. With right striving he becomes bearer of cold and heat etc. signifies that there are āsavas sammākammanta, right action: kāyaduccaritehi āerati virati pañivirati pañivirati veramañā akirayā akarañā anajjhāpatti velā-anatikkhamo setughāto sammākammanto maggammam magga-pariyāpannam The āsava arisen from wrongful action (miccha-kammanta) should be abandoned by avoiding (parivajjānā). 6.cankers (Āsavas) to be removing (āsava vinodanā pahātabbā) signifies that there are āsavas that should be abandoned by sammāsañkappa, right thought which can be called 'wholesome thought': nekkhamma-sañkappā, avyāpāda-sañkappā, avihimsā-sañkappā ime vuccanti kusalasañkappā. The removed by right unwholesome thoughts should be thought; for example, the thought of sensual pleasure (kāmaavitakka) should be abandoned by thought of renunciation (nekkhamma sañkappo). In that manner the Buddha says that a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, sensual pleasure... thought of cruelty etc., abandons it, removes it, does away with it, and annihilates it. signifies that the āsava sammāsamādhi, right concentration: Yā cittaassa ñhiti... sammāsamādhi Samādhi-sambojjhāgo maggammam magga-pariyāpannam ayam vuccati sammāsamādhi. By concentration on enlightenment factors a bhikkhu should abandon the āsavas that should be abandoned by developing.

Among the factors of Noble Eight-fold Path, sammavācā is omitted here; however, it seems to be included in sammāsañkappa. When thoughts of sensual pleasure (kāmaavitakka) etc. are abandoned by sammāsañkappa, right speech (sammāvācā) follows as a matter of course because speech comes after thought: vitakketvā vicaretvā pacchā vācam bhindati. In the Mahācattārōsakasutta of the Majjhimanikāya (III 73) disposition of speech (vācā-sañkhāra) is included in the level of sañkappa. The speech (vācā) is sekhas who are endeavoring to reach the goal. If there is any necessity, it should be used only for discussing the Dhamma. Hence, the Buddha's admonition is that one should do either of two things: hold discussion on the Dhamma or maintain noble silence (dhammā vā kathā ariyo vā tuñhibhavo: M I 161). The Buddha praises it is the case of Anuruddha who is under higher training with his fellow bhikkhus (sābrahmacāri):

“Whosoever notices that the pots of water for drinking, washing or the latrine are low or empty takes care of them. If they are too heavy for him, he calls someone else by a signal of the hand and they move it by joining hands, but because of this we do not break out into speech. But every five days we sit together all night discussing the Dhamma. That is how we abide diligent, ardent, and resolute.”

Therefore right speech (sammāvāca) is not necessarily mentioned in this sutta as it is understood to be included in the sammāsaṅkappa. It is because of this that the Sabbāsavasutta is preached by the Buddha to bhikkhus who are under higher training (sekha). As previously stated, the Buddha says that the destruction of āsava and sees, not for one who does not know and see.

CONCLUSION

In this manner āsavas
Thus, in the sutta,
āsava covers all defilements. In the sutta the Buddha stresses that every āsava, in whichever manner comes to flow, should be obstructed by the path. When all these āsavas have been blocked by wisdom (paññāya), one can make an end to suffering. At the very end of this sutta the Buddha declares that with the complete comprehension of conceit he (sammā mænābhissamayā antam akāsi dukkhassati). It is said in this manner because herein the term “māna” (conceit) which is comprehended through arhant-hood is not simple self-esteem but it is the term for 'insistence on I-ness.

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