

THE ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM AS A CRITICAL RESPONSE TO SASSATAVĀDA AND UCCHEDAVĀDA

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Brahmanism and Samana Movement

In India at the time of the Buddha, there were two predominant religious practices prevalent: Brahmanism and Samana Movement. The main emphasis of Brahmanism was offering of sacrifice and sacrificial ritual, which is believed to bring prosperity in this life and the next life. Brahmanism classified people into four classes (*varṇa*) in which Brāhmaṇas, the priest class were the privileged top class over the other three classes, namely warrior class (*khattiya*), business class (*vessa*) and servant class (*sudda*). Within Brahmanism, Upaniṣadic thinkers emerged and they advocated Brahman, the Impersonal Cosmic Principle. In Upaniṣadic thought an individual soul (*ātman* or *jīva ātma*) is not distinguishable from the cosmic soul (*brahman* or *paramātman*). Its fundamental concept is found in its famous saying of *Tat Tvam Asi* (Thou art Brahman). During the time of the Buddha Upaniṣadic thought was not much publicly embraced as opposed to popular Brahmanism which encouraged sacred bathe, sacrifice and ritual.

The other religious practice Samana Movement emerged as challenge to Vedic authority, sacrifice and ritual as well as to the privileged status of brāhmaṇa class in the society. Samana Movement was mainly led by the warrior class. They tried to find the solution to the problematic continuous cycle of rebirth and re-death. Their religious practice was impracticable to people with family life, so they "went forth from home to homelessness" in pursuit of their spiritual quest. They were collectively called as samaṇas (wanderers). The six dominant samana teachers and their views were recorded in *Sāmaccaphala Sutta* in Pali Canon. The first teacher, Pūraṇa Kassapa advocated moral nihilism (*akiriyavāda*). He rejected morality concept, saying that there is neither bad (*pāpa*) nor good (*pucca*) morality. The second teacher, Makkhali Gosāla's teaching was strict determinism (*niyatīvāda*). He teaches that human life is pre-destined and that people do not have freedom of choices and do not have control over events happening to them. The third teacher, Ajita Kesakambalī promulgated annihilationism or materialism (*ucchedavāda*). According to this doctrine, there is no life after death. It is said "fools and wise, at the breaking-up of the body, are destroyed and perished; they do not exist after death." The fourth teacher, Pakudha Kaccāyana taught pluralism. His doctrine was centred on the seven principles or substances that make up the world in ultimate sense. The fifth teacher, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the founder of Jainism, propagated the extreme non-violence. The sixth teacher, Sacjaya Belaṭṭhaputta took skepticism as a centre of his doctrine. Sacjaya Belaṭṭhaputta says that our limited senses are not able to comprehend this unlimited world with precise.

Besides followers of those six leading samana teachers, there were numerous other wanderers (*paribbajaka*). An asceticism was their religious practice.

Sassatavāda and Ucchedavāda

All those views held by brahmanic and samaṇa practitioners fall into two major views: Spiritualism or eternalism (*Sassatavāda*) and Materialism or annihilationism (*Ucchedavāda*). In *Kaccayanagotta Sutta* of the Samyutta Nikaya, the Buddha addresses Kaccayana: "This world, O Kaccayana, generally proceeds on a duality, of (the view of) existence and (the view of) non-existence... Everything exists - this is one extreme. Nothing exists - this is another extreme. Not approaching either extreme the Tathagata teaches you a doctrine by the middle (*Tathagato majjhena dhammam deseti*)."

Sassatavāda believes in existence of the soul, eternal substance, that is "permanent, independent and non-dividable". This metaphysical soul is permanent but the physical body is impermanent. In *Bhagavadgītā* Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that "The unborn, the permanent, the eternal, the ancient, it is slain not when the body is slain." In Pāli Canon its doctrine is recorded as "*accam-jīvam accam-sarīram*" (the soul is different from the body). According to *Sassatavāda*, there are two principles: physical body and soul. These two are dualistic principle. Conflict arises due to the opposing needs of two principles. The need of soul is spiritualism and the need of body is materialism or sensual pleasure. The soul wishes to go to the heaven but the body pulls down it to the hell. The physical principle of body is the bondage for the spiritual principle of soul. In order to liberate the soul from the bondage of body, one should restrict physical sensual pleasure and mortify the body. Self-mortification is referred in Pāli as "*atta-kilamathama yoga*" (practice of self-mortification).

Ucchedavāda, the opposing view to *Sassatavāda*, is not the theory that denies the existence of soul though it does not accept rebirth. From the Buddhist perspective it is a new interpretation of soul because it identifies oneself with physical body. According to Buddhism a person who identifies oneself with one's mental or material object, whether permanent or impermanent, in the following three ways as "this is mine" (*etam mama*), "this I am" (*eso ham asmi*) and "this is my self" (*eso me atta*) is a holder of self-entity theory. *Ucchedavāda* holds the identity principle as recorded in Pāli Canon as "*taṃ jīvam taṃ sarīram*" (the soul and the body are the same). *Ucchedavāda* doctrine advocates that it is meaningless to deny sensual pleasures and mortify physical body in order to receive illusory bliss in the next life. One should indulge in sensual pleasures as much as can. This practice is referred as "*kāmasukh'allikānuyoga*" (practice of sensual gratification).

These two opposing doctrines can be seen in the following table.

	<i>Sassatavāda</i>	<i>Ucchedavāda</i>
Doctrinal aspect	Spiritualism/Eternalism	Materialism/ Annihilationism
	Religious	Anti-Religious
	Duality Principle	Identity Principle
	Theory of Metaphysical Self	Theory of the Physical Self
	Desire of being (<i>bhava-tanha</i>)	Desire of non-being (<i>vibhava-tanha</i>)
	Acceptance of moral retribution	Denial of moral retribution
Practice	Self-Mortification	Sensual Indulgence
Aim	Emancipation from bodily bondage	Gratification in sensuality

The origin of Buddhism as a critical response to Sassatavāda and Ucchedavāda

Sassatavāda and *Ucchedavāda* paved the way of emergence of Buddhism. The Buddha's spiritual quest was to end suffering. For that very goal practices based on *Sassatavāda* and *Ucchedavāda* view were clearly insufficient. The Buddha described the sensual indulgence advocated by *Ucchedavāda* as "low, common, worldly, ignoble, not leading to the goal" and further described the self-mortification based on *Sassatavāda* as "painful, ignoble, not leading to the goal." In fact, the Buddha's life in king palace and six years severe asceticism was testimony of these two extreme practices and either did not lead him to the goal of ending suffering and realizing *nibbana*. Thus, at his very first sermon at Deer Park at Isipatana after his attainment of Enlightenment, the Buddha instructed to his five disciples to avoid two extreme practices as "Bhikkhus, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by one gone forth from the house-life. What are the two? There is devotion to indulgence of pleasure in the objects of sensual desire,...; and there is devotion to self-torment..." and to follow the Middle Path (*majjhima paṭipadā*) which gives "vision, knowledge, and leads to peace, acquaintance, and *nibbana*".

The Middle Path is the Noble Eightfold Path¹ (*ariya-atthangikamagga*). The basis doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Path is the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).

The doctrine of Dependent Origination explains the cause of suffering and its cessation. Its causal principle is stated in the Pali suttas as "whenever A is present, B is present" (*imasmim sati idam hoti*), "whenever A is absent, B is absent" (*imasmim asati idam na hoti*) and "from the arising of A, B arises" (*imass'uppada idam uppajjati*), "from the cessation of A, B ceases" (*imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati*).

¹ 1. Right View (*Samma ditthi*), 2. Right Intention (*Samma sankappa*), 3. Right Speech (*Samma vaca*), 4. Right Action (*Samma kammanta*), 5. Right Livelihood (*Samma ajiva*), 6. Right Effort (*Samma vayama*), 7. Right Mindfulness (*Samma sati*) and 8. Right Concentration (*Samma samadhi*)

Based on this doctrine of Dependent Origination one realizes that there is no existence of "permanent, independent and undividable self" rather than conditioned process of psycho-physical phenomena suffering one should not Further, one understands that for the cessation of suffering one should not torture physical body or pursue sensual pleasures but to eradicate the three root mental defilements: craving (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*).

Conclusion

Buddhism emerged as a critical response to two opposing views of *Sassatavāda* and *Ucchedavāda* and their corresponding two extreme practices of self-mortification and sensual indulgence. Buddhism transcended *Sassatavāda* and *Ucchedavāda* by its doctrine of Dependent Origination and avoided two extreme practices of self-mortification and sensual indulgence by it's the Middle Path.

Хураангуй

МЭӨ VI зууны үед Энэтхэг орноо Брахманизм болон Самана (С: *Шрамана* Т: *dge sbyong*) хэмээх шашны гол хоёр урсгал байсан бөгөөд тэдгээрийн номлолыг авч үзэхүл Сассатавада (Т: *yod par smra ba* М: Буйд өгүүлэгч) эсхүл Уччедавада (Т: *chad par smra ba* М: Тасархайд өгүүлэгч) хэмээх хоёр үзлийн аль нэгэнд багтаж байв. Сассатавада үзлээр бол биеэс тусдаа "мөнх, хуваагдашгүй, өөрийн эрхтэй" (Т: *rtag gcig rang dbang can*) бодгалийн эзэн (Т: *gang zag gi bdag*) байх агаад зовлонгийн үндэс нь хүслийн таван эрдэмд (Т: *'dod pa'i yon tan lnga*) шунах бие хэмээн үзэж өөрийн биеийг зовоосноор зовлонгоос гэтэлнэ хэмээн үзэж байхад Уччедавада үзэл нь биеэс тусдаа бодгалийн эзэн гэж байхгүй, бие хэмээх нь хувь хүн мөн хэмээн үзэж энэ бие эвдэрсний дараа дахин төрөл гэж байхгүй тул биеийн цэнгэлийг эдлэх нь зүйтэй хэмээн үздэг байна.

Харин Бурхан багш энэхүү Сассатавада, Уччедавада хоёр үзэл болон тэдгээрт тулгуурласан өөрийн биеийг зовоох, биеийн цэнгэл эдлэх гэсэн хоёр эсрэг зам мөр аль аль нь буруу үзэл, зам мөр болохыг сурган шүтэн барилдлагын үзэл (П: *патиччасамуппада* Т: *rtan 'brel 'byung ba*) болон үүнд суурилсан дундаж замыг (П: *тажжхима патипада* Т: *dbu ma'i lam*) номносон нь дээрхи үзэл, зам мөрүүдээс үлэмж ялгамжаатай бөгөөд бодийн хутгийг олоход чухам үнэн зөв үзэл, зам мөр ажгуу.