

The Concept of Flux in Different Buddhist schools

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According to Buddhism, the Law of Flux or change state that nothing is permanent but is ever changing the Law of Becoming states that everything is always in the process of changing into something else. Not only is everything changing but the natural of that change is a process of becoming something else, however, in short long the process may be "Nothing is but is becoming." A small plant is always in the process of becoming a big tree is always in the process of becoming an old tree, there is no point of time at which anything is not becoming something else.¹

In the view of Buddhist philosophy time is one continuous process, each fragmentary portion of time merging into the other and forming such an unbroken continuity that no dividing line can precisely be drawn separating past time from present or present from future . The moment you think of the present and say to yourself this moment is present time it is gone, vanished into the past before you can even complete your sentence. The present is always slipping into the past, becoming the past and the future is always becoming the present everything is becoming. This is an universal process, a constant flux. It is when we miss the continuity of action that we speak in terms of things rather than process or becomings.

The Buddha believes that everything is impermanent everything is momentary and everything has a duration. It is because of this that there is no being, there is only a becoming, the state of every individual being unstable, temporary and sure to pass away. Everything be it a person, a thing or God, is therefore merely a putting together of component elements. Further each individual without exception the relation of its component part is eternally changing and never the same for two consecutive moments.²

Impermanence is a fact-it is self-evident. But why is it that all things are impermanent and it is -due to causal to a law that one state change another. The operation of this law is dependent upon certain conditions and therefore, the law is known as the law of dependent-origination that beings present this becomes. The Buddha said that whatever exists arises from causes and conditions and is in every impermanent. This impermanence is of the three kinds: (a) Impermanence of life period (b) Momentary Impermanence (c) The principle of Impermanence. The Theory of Impermanency in Buddhism has been generally misunderstood because it came to be confused with a later theory known as the Doctrine of Moments (Kṣānavāda) which was formulated from a logical analysis of the process of change (Parināma) by the later Buddhist scholars belonging to the scholastic (Abhidharma)-tradition but such a theory is conspicuous by its absence in the early discourses. "There is no moment, no tinkling, no particle of time that the river stops flowing." Things are momentary not because they are momentary, but because they are characterized by arising (uppada) and passing away (vaya). An extended definition is sometimes met with in the early text which analyses the process of change into three stages: arising passing away, decay and change of what exist. The theory of moments may be derived from a logical analysis of this decay or change which literally means change of what exist. But even here the change is not commuted in terms of moments. Whatever is born is considered to be impermanent, since it is sure to perish. In short, impermanence is synonym of for arising and passing away or birth and destruction."³

The Buddhist theory of Impermanence is extended to include everything, including consciousness, which is usually taken to be permanent, as the soul or as one of its qualities. According to Buddhist psychology, mind is nothing but a constant stream or flow of thoughts. In Abhidhamma Pitaka which describes, the four "ultimate-truths". Namely- consciousness, psychic factors, material-qualities and eternal-bliss presents the Theory of Impermanence indirectly. In above discussed chapters impermanence has

been discussed in form. Of the three component things which are subject to incessant change, The three component things are Consciousness, Psychic-Factors and Material Qualities. These three component things constitute a human being which is not only subject to change in itself, but also experience various kinds of change (suffering) which he does not visualize properly during to be engrossed in the state of ignorance. Not even a single unit which constitute a being is static even for two moment each units keeps on constantly by

¹ S. N.3 , PP. 12,18,66.90 M.N. P. 26

² Ps.Anapanakatha-Vol. I, P.230

³ VISM. P 450

changing and does not remain static for two consecutive moments, By accepting the theory of causation and conditionality Buddhism avoids the two extremes of (Sabbam-atthi) everything is and (Sabbam natthi) everything is not, advocates everything becomes, happens by way of cause and effects. Thus, by its theory of causation- Buddhism avoids both extremes and establishes free will and moral responsibility.⁴

The second basic characteristic of the word of experience, namely dukkha is but a logical corollary arising from this law of universal impermanence. For the impermanent nature of everything can but lead to one inescapable conclusion. As everything impermanent they can not be made the basis of permanent happiness. Whatever is transient is by that very fact unsatisfactory.

The term dukkha should not be misunderstood in a narrower sense to mean only pain, suffering, imaginary or sorrow. As a philosophical term it has a wider connotation, as wide as that of the term anicca in this wider sense, it includes deeper ideas such as imperfection, unrest, conflict in short unsatisfactoriness unrest, conflict is short unsatisfactoriness. This is precisely the states of jhana, resulting from the practice of higher meditation and which free from suffering as ordinarily understood are also included in dukkha.⁵

According to Buddhism, the idea of self or soul is not only a false and imaginary belief, with no corresponding objective reality but is also harmful from an ethical point of view. For it produces such harmful thoughts of I, me and mine, selfish desires, attachment and other unwholesome states of mind. It could also be a misery in disguise, to one who

accepts it as true. This brings into relief the close connection between the Buddhist doctrine of Impermanence and Buddhist ethics: If the world of experience is Impermanent, by that very fact it cannot be made the basis of permanent happiness. What is not permanent and therefore what not characterised by unsatisfactoriness (dukkha) can not be considered as one's own (saka) or as a heaven of security for the things that one gets attached to are constantly changing. Hence attachment to them would only lead to unrest and sorrow. But one knows things as they truly are (vathabhatam.) i.e. as anicca, dukkha and anattii, one ceases to get agitated by them one ceases to take refuge in them. Just as attachment to things is to get freed from them. Thus, in the context of Buddhist ethics, the perception of impermanence is only a preliminary step to the eradication of all cravings which in turn has the attainment of Nibbanas its final goal.⁶

The various schools of Buddhism explained the early Buddhist doctrine of change on formulated theory of moments. This theory is based on the three sankhata lakkhanas which we referred to earlier. In fact on the Interpretation of the third theory " Decay or change of what exist" All schools differ widely, as if to justify the very meaning conveyed by these two words. The Vaibhāsika school interpret sthitiyat Jathatva (thitassa aññathatta) as jaratā, postulate another characteristic called (sthiti) and thus increase the number of Sankhatalakkhaṇas to four (a) Jati (origination) (b) sthiti (existence) (c) Jarati (decay) (d) anityati (extinction), All elements mental as well as material characterised by them are Samskrta. They defined moment as the time during which the four characteristics accomplish their operation.⁷

'Flux in Abhidhamma Pitaka' presents the theory of change according to Abhidhamma Pitaka and its ancillary books. The Abhidhamma Pitaka which describes the four 'ultimate-truths' -Consciousness (Citta), Psychic-factors (Cetasika), presents the theory of Impermanence indirectly . Here it (i.e. the theory of impermanence) has been discussed in form of three component things which are subject to incessant change. The three component things are Consciousness (Citta) Psychic-factors (Cetasika) and

Material Qualities (Ropa). These three component things are consciousness (Citta) Psychic-factor (Cetasika) and material qualities these three things constitute a human being which is not only subject to change in itself but also experiences various kinds of change (suffering) which he does not visualize properly owing to be engrossed in the state of Ignorance. Not even a single unit which constitute a human being is static even for two moments. Each unit keeps on constantly changing and does not remain static for two consecutive moments.⁸

⁴ Dubey. S. N., Cross Currents in early Buddhism.

⁵ Kalupahna, D. J., The Principles of Buddhist Psychology

⁶ V.M, P.622 Pa

⁷ V.M., P.622

⁸ A. N, P.109

'Dependent Origination and Relation' which describes the theories of the Dependent Origination and the Relation. The theory of Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppāda) describes the chain of causation a man is subject to. The Dependent Origination is the doctrine of the conditionality of all phenomena of existence, physical and mental both. It shows that everything in the universe arises, is supported and passes away dependent upon a variety of conditioning factors which themselves are likewise dependent upon other factors. Thus according to this doctrine nothing exist independently unrelated to and unaffected by other phenomena in its environment. And the thing which are conditioned by the other factors is as per the statement 'Anicca Vata Sankhāra, nothing but Impermanent'.⁹

The Sautrāntikas does not agree with this interpretation of the Vaibhāsikas. In their view, the four characteristics apply not to one but to a series of momentary element : "The series itself is called sthiti (subsistence); its origin is called Jati its cessation is vaya and the difference in its preceding and succeeding moments in its preceding and succeeding moments is called sthityānyathātra".

According to Theravadins, each dhamma (element of existence) has three moments namely, the moment of origination; the moment of subsistence; and the moment of cessation. These three moments do not correspond to three different dhammas. On the contrary, they represent three phases the nascent, the static and the cessant of one "momentary" dhamma. According to the dhamma has three momentary phases or stages. It erases in the first moment, subsists in the second and perishes in the third moment. Like Sautramika, they also accept the fact that a momentary dhamma has no phase called jarata. Hence, the Sautrantikas and the Theravadins, apply the characteristic of jar at a only to a series of momentary dhammas. In their opinion, jarata is the difference between the preceding and the succeeding moments of series.¹⁰

The logical development of this theory of moments is the denial of motion. For, if all the elements of existence are of momentary duration, they have no time to move. In the case of momentary elements wherever appearance takes place there itself takes place disappearance. In keeping with this theory-motion has given a new definition. According to this definition, motion has to be understood, not as the movement of one material element one locus in space to but as the appearance of momentary elements in adjacent locations ; creating a false picture of movement. The best example is the light of lamp. The so called light of the lamp, it is argued, is nothing but a common designation of a series of flashing points when the production changes place one says that the light has changed. But in reality other flames have appeared, in another place.

References :

N'V.	:	Anguttara Nikāya
S.N.	:	Samyutta Nikaya
M.N.	:	Majjhima Nikaya
VMA	:	Visuddhimagga
PSM	:	Patisambhidamagga
VISM	:	Visuddhimagga

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⁹ AN., P.111

¹⁰ A.N., P.100