

Upekkhā one of the Buddhist *Abhidhamma* Term It's Use in Myanmar

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Abstract

The title of this paper is “*Upekkhā* One of the Buddhist *Abhidhamma* Term it's Use in Myanmar”. Some, mostly used by Myanmar, are selected from *Abhidhamma* terms in *Pāli* and are strived for study. This is only predominant word and other relevant word of *Abhidhamma* is also included and explained wherever necessary.

It is found that Myanmar use the word ‘*upekkhā*’ one of the *Abhidhamma* terms in their daily life. Especially, it is used to say by persons who are of old age and knowledge.

Myanmar people understand the word *upekkhā* in the sense of neglect and use the term relating to those which they do not want to give special consideration and which they do not want to treat for various reasons. As people have things that they like or dislike, they are interested or not, they are within reach or not, they have capability or not, etc. they have to look on unconcernedly because of incapability, or having no interest though capable, or dislike.

These four things, *mettā*, *karunā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā* are called ‘four kinds of *Bramacariya*’ in Myanmar. The former three of these four, as containing wanting, have close relation to loving-kindness, hatred, grief and joy. Depending on becoming or not becoming as it is desired, wanting, infatuation, obsession, anger and disgust may arise. *Upekkhā* is, accordingly, included in praying, for well-being for the sake of controlling good intention not to turn into bad one and as *upekkhā* is also more tender and sublime than former three.

Upekkhā is included in ten *Pāramī* but people from Myanmar do not use and speak about *Upekkhāpāramī* concerning with *pāramī* and *upekkhā*, like *paññapāramī*, *khanṭīpāramī* and so on.

Keyword: *Upekkhā*, *pāramī*, loving-kindness, *Bramacariya*.

Introduction

It is found that Myanmar people use the word ‘*upekkhā*’ one of the *Abhidhamma* terms in their daily life. Especially, it is used to say by persons who are of old age and knowledge.

People from Myanmar understand the word *upekkhā* in the sense of neglect and use the term relating to those which they do not want to give special consideration and which they do not want to treat for various reasons. As people have things that they like or dislike, they are interested or not, they are within reach or not,

they have capability or not, etc. they have to look on unconcernedly because of incapability, or having no interest though capable, or dislike.

Myanmar sayings for ‘I’m not heedful, or I don’t keep in mind’, ‘I’ll ignore’, etc. seem to be rather rude, they happen to imply that the speaker does not resemble a wise, a gentleman, or is poor in endurance, upholding anger, arrogant, narrow-minded, superstition and so on. Therefore, *upekkhā* is substituted for such expression. In substituting so, there may be some difference relating to the dignity for the user. The Myanmar usage of *upekkhā* may definitely be similar to the usage in *Abhidhamma* or not in some cases.

Original Meaning in *Abhidhamma*

Upekkhā is a combination of two Pāli words, *Upa* and *Ikkha* in which *Upa* means ‘justly, balancing, partially’ and *Ikkha* ‘to look (sense)’. Commentaries and sub-commentaries define the word that it is neutral feeling (disinterestedness, equanimity), equivalent to feeling which is neither pain nor pleasure but experiencing happiness and misery equally. Then, it is explained that without falling for any side of happiness and unhappiness, it takes a look on unconcernedly, or not against any so and, it keeps neutral feeling when it meets comfort and discomfort. *Upekkhā* is also called ‘*Adukkhamasukha*’ or ‘*Tatramajjhataṭṭā*’.

Adukkhamasukha means feeling which is neither pain nor pleasure. In other words, it can be defined as zero point between joy and sorrow. This is referred to regarding with indifference or uninterestedness between happiness and unhappiness when desired or undesired senses are met with, without such senses. According to *Mūlatīkā*, it is like a track of a deer on stone-flat. It means that the track should be found out by inference because there is no impression. It is also named ‘*Nippītikasukha* (emotionless comfort)’.

Tatramajjhataṭṭā, it means regarding with indifference on its associated things or zero point between joy and sorrow. It is also exemplified neutrality like a coachman who drives a coach drawn by two horses keeps his eyes on both of two horses equally, and like a judge who considers equally both complainant and defendant. Here, it should be noticed that it is not a state of total neglect without keeping in mind. It is defined that it is a mental state of equanimity without loving-kindness and hatred. This mere state, on account of having the nature of looking on unconcernedly, is named ‘*upekkhā*’, of course.

According to above mentioned, not only *vedanā* but also *tatramajjhataṭṭā* can be named *upekkhā*. In addition, there are also *upekkhās* associated with *vīriya* (effort) and *paññā* (wisdom). According to the *Visuddhimagga* there are ten kinds of *upekkhā*. They are –

- (a) *Vedanupekkhā* = neutral feeling between comfort and discomfort when one meets with good and bad sense-objects. (It is *vedanā*).
- (b) *Brahmavihārupekkhā* = taking a look in unconcernedly in view of *sabbesattākammassakā*, i.e comfort and discomfort of all living beings are due to their past actions. (It is *tatramajjhataṭṭā*).
- (c) *Chalangupekkhā* = six kinds of taking look by comprehension with mindfulness so as not to be attached and angry also when apprehended good and bad six sense-objects. (It is *tatramajjhataṭṭā*).
- (d) *Vipassanupekkhā* = reasoning after tranquil equanimity of substitution of new ones for old damages in contemplating through special intellect in order to realize impermanence, suffering and not-self of

dhammas, such as: *nāmas* (mentality), *rūpa* (materiality), *khandha* (group of existence). Without please and displeasure also how new mind, matter and so aggregations happen where old ones are ruined on which are set a look of rationalism with different wisdom for the sake of realizing they are impermanent, discomfort and no self-hood. (It is *paññā*).

- (e) *Vīriyupekkhā* = Effort making equal by adjusting to meet the requirement not to be excessive or needful in striving for supra mundane attainment. (It's *vīriya*).
- (f) *Tatramajjhātpekkhā* = Taking a look unconcernedly without striving for being in accord with associated things. (It's *tatramajjhātātā*).
- (g) *Sankhārupekkhā* = It means it's taking a look unconcernedly without requiring to dispel carefully the conditioned things such as hindrances (to the progress of mind) when concentration of the fifth absorption (*pañcamajjhānaSamādhi*) or Insight knowledge (*vipassanāñāna*) is matured in endeavouring supra mundane attainment. (It is *paññā*).
- (h) *Jānupekkhā* = Taking a look unconcernedly not telling even the delight in absorption that would be attained fall into happiness. (It is *tatramajjhātātā*).
- (i) *Bojjhangupekkhā* = Appearing evenly of factors of Enlighten without being excessive or needful that come into parts of supra mundane path. (It is *tatramajjhātātā*).
- (j) *Pārisuddhupekkhā* = The state of paying no attention to those arising again because those hindrances had already been freed. (It is *tatramajjhātātā*).

Upekkhā Used in Myanmar

I have learnt how Myanmar people use the word 'upekkhā' as follow:

- (a) Some parents and teachers said, "I have made indifferent or detached on him" when their children drew back from their desire and also then went away from them.
- (b) When someone say something that he pays no attention or takes no care, it is said, "I take a look unconcernedly on this matter". The reason for saying so may be that the speaker does not like that matter, or that there would be no benefit for him, or that danger would be met with. Among the reasons, it is mostly used because of one's dislike.
- (c) Myanmar used to pray for the well-being of other by contemplating or reciting "*Averāhontu, abyāpajjāhontu, anīghāhontu, sukhīattānampariharantu, dukkhāmuccantu, yathāladdhasampattitōmāvīgacchantu, kammassakā*". There, *kammassakā* (those whose *kammās* are their own properties) is *upekkhā*. Some people speak about *upekkhā* in specific meaning, or in general meaning. Buddhist monks used to tell about *upekkhā* exactly in explaining *kammassakā*.

Compare and Drawing Conclusion

Upekkhā is understood 'looking on unconcernedly, ignoring, regarding with indifference, turning a blind eye' by Myanmar. They use 'li' *ljushu. chin:* and *upekkhā* alternately in the same sense. 'li' *ljushu.* is defined in dictionaries as follow.

- (a) *le'-la'-li'-lji'* = be medium, medium. This term has not been seen separately. It is usually associated with '*lju* meaningless to be understood 'to be medium'.
- (b) *Lji' lju* – ignoring, without paying attention to (*lji' ljushu.,lji' ljupju., lji' ljunei*, and so on are usually used).

Lji' lju – medium

The ten sorts of *upekkhā* have already been mentioned above according to the *visuddhimagga*. In comparing *Abhidhamma* with the *Visuddhimagga*, though *upekkhā* can be born in mind of many kinds of person, it can mostly be found in meditator those who have attained a certain perception. Common people may be born *upekkhā* but it is likely to be difficult. The Myanmar usage '*upekkhāpju*'. may be proper or improper for the meaning in the light of *Abhidhamma*. The fact that whether it is real *upekkhā* or not is based on the mind of *upekkhā* doer.

Neglect through unsatisfied is not a real *upekkhā* but *Dosa* (anger). Such speak as “I have been detached (*upekkhā*) from him; don't allow him even to treat on the shadow of my house from now on”, or “Don't be detached from it. Don't you feel sorrow (sad, displeas) for it?”, shows that the *upekkhā* -doer is (so called) feeling anger or grief.

Here in this place, it should be explained why *kamassakā* (*upekkhā*) is contain in praying for the well-being of others. In accord with Buddhism, Myanmar used to pray for the well-being of others as follows:

Sabbesattā = may all beings-

Averāhontu = be free from danger (*Mettā*);

Abyapajjhāhontu = be free ill-will (*Mettā*);

Anīghāhontu = be free from troubles (*Mettā*);

Sukhāttānampariharantu = keep up themselves comfortably (*Mettā*);

Dukkhāmuccantu = free from suffering and misery (*Karunā*);

Yathāladhasampattitōmāvīgacchantu = conserve their obtained success and happiness (*Muditā*); and

Kamassakā = they go according to their own *kammas* (done previously by themselves) (*Upekkhā*.)

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