

Realization of Anatta

(Realisation of Anatta)



Buddha Delivering the Discourse on Anatta Sutta

Introduction

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*After attaining the self-enlightenment, Buddha preached the first discourse, turning the wheel of Dhamma, (Dhamma SekkyaTite) and the second discourse, Anatta Lakkhana tote to the five Bhikkhu's along with millions of Brahmas. At the end of the second discourse the five Bhikkhu's and million of Brahmas attained the Arahatsip. That was why **Anatta Lakkhana Tote** is important in determining whether one has attain – Sotapanna, Sedagami, Anangami or the Arahatsip. It is said that perception of Anatta (No-Self) is a critical test to use on all of us of us striving towards liberation.*

*According to the law of the characteristic of **Anatta – (No-Self)** , it is said that being who cannot rid of one's own identity, like I did this, I did that and I accomplished that and I was once a King, etc, are those who have not realize the law of the characteristic **Anatta**, (no-self,) no self identity, living with **sakkaya-ditthi** - self identity in all of the existences. Thus, Buddha said, attachment will produce **sakkaya-ditthi – self identifier**. It is important to realize that there is no-self (Anatta) and be rid of Sakkaya Ditthi in order that we could advance to a higher plane of existence.*

The moment we could realize Anatta,(no-self,) (no identifier to oneself), then, your past akusala kamma will disappear; thus, ceases the sakkaya-ditthi (the self identifier). One then could advance to a higher plane of existence/

*Thus, no matter where we are reborn, in whatever abode of existence, we must live with a realization of the characteristics of Anatta – no self. Thus if one can clearly perceive the characteristic of **anatta**, one attains the stage of the knowledge of **sotapatti magga** (path of the streamwinner) . To him, there is no **sakkaya-ditthi** (personality belief). This is one of the important criteria in the attainment of on the path of the stream.*

Anatta Realisation and Past Kammās

People seldom realize the characteristic of the law of Anatta and hence, he/she could be living with unwholesome thoughts that result in *akusala kammās* and that will follow him/her continuously through the round of birth and rebirth, Samsara. This mental make-up is called *sakkaya-ditthi*, the identifier. When one has the thought of his past, his past akusala kammās will gain strength thus resulting in the fruition of past Akusala kamma.

Beings like *devas* and *Sakka* living in the six deva loka though they may be enjoying the luxuries and happiness, if Sakkaya Ditthi (self-identity) (if they have not realize the characteristic of Annatta) they may be obliged to exist in the four *apaya loka* in their next rebirth.

Thus, beings in whose mental make-up, whence *sakkaya-ditthi* exists, then, they are continuously obliged to descend or fall towards the *apaya loka* although they may be living in the highest of the *Brahma loka*. This was so, because the mental make up Sakkaya Ditthi (self-identity) will force him to commit more akusala kamm, now and in the future. This *akusala kamma*, will forever accompanied the beings throughout the round of rebirths, samsara,

Beings whose mental make-up is entirely freed from *sakkaya-ditthi* (realized the characteristic of Anatta) can look forward to higher plane of existence like the deva and Brahma loka even though they may be living in the human world, because without sakkaya ditthi, he will not commit akusala kamma..

Anatta Realisation and Future Kamma

Human beings, devas and Brahmas, who possess *sakkaya-ditthi* in their mental make-up (has not realize the characteristic of Anatta) may be good and virtuous beings today, but may commit an infinite number of the *duccarita*, such as the great *panatipata kamma* of matricide, patricide, or killing arahats, or the *adinnadana kamma* of stealing, etc., tomorrow, or the day after, or next month, or next year or in the next following existences. For such act of akusala kamma, though they live within the fold of the *Buddha Sasana*, but tomorrow, or the next day, etc., they may be beyond the pale of the *Buddha Sasana*, and may even become destroyers of the *Sasana*.

Human beings, devas, and Brahmas, however, who well perceive the characteristic of *anatta*, and their mental make-up cease to commit the *duccarita* and other *akusala kamma* even in their dreams from the moment they get rid of *sakkaya-ditthi*, although they may continue to journey through the *samsara* for many more existences and many more world-cycles to come. From the day they are free from *sakkaya-ditthi* and until the final existence when they attain *Nibbana*, they remain within the fold of the *Buddha Sasana* permanently and continuously during successive existences and successive world-cycles. For them they no longer will have any existence or any world where the *Buddha Sasana* has disappeared.

How Past Kamma Become Inoperative

Being who has an infinite numbers of past akusala kamma, the moment he could extinguish the *sakkaya-ditthi* (perceived the characteristic of the law of Anatta) his past akusala kamma become inoperative, or erased.

A being that possesses *sakkaya-ditthi* harbors a strong attachment for the series of khandha during past existences and past world-cycles by transforming them into ' I '. Thinking 'In past existences and in past world-cycles I have been on many occasions a human being, a deva, or a Brahma' thus, acquires the *sakkaya-ditthi*. Thus, that the infinite number of past *akusala kamma* committed in past existences and past world-cycles, and which have not as yet produced resultants, accompany that being wherever he may be reborn. These past *akusala kamma* will be forced to fruition soon.

Beings who clearly perceive the *anatta* characteristic, They, clearly perceive that the *akusala kamma* which they had committed in the past are not 'persons', or 'beings' or I or 'my kamma', and that they are that which arise and disappear in an instant. That is why these past *akusala kamma* disappear entirely as soon as *sakkaya-ditthi* disappears. However, the past *kusala kamma* do not disappear through the mere disappearance of *sakkaya-ditthi*. It is only when the stage of the *arahatta magga* is reached, and when *tanha* is completely eradicated, do *kusala kamma* also totally disappear.

The Evil of Sakkaya-Ditthi

Sakkaya-ditthi: Self-identification view, the view that mistakenly identifies any of the *khandha* as "self"; the first of the ten fetters (*samyojana*). Abandonment of *sakkaya-ditthi* is one of the hallmarks of stream-entry.

Being with the thought of - 'It is kamma I have committed. It is my kamma'. Because of this forcible possessive act that kamma is obliged to produce its resultants. To this extent are worldlings possessing *sakkaya-ditthi* .

It is the same in the case of the remaining *akusala kamma*. It is because of the forcible possessive act of *sakkaya-ditthi* that *akusala kamma* accompanied beings throughout *samsara*, wherever they may be reborn, and produces resultants. Beings find that they cannot discard their *akusala kamma* even while they are being oppressed by their resultants and are thereby in the process of suffering great privations. **These beings regard such *akusala kamma* as '*akusala kamma I have committed*', and thus take possession of them even though they may be in the process of suffering in hell through the resultants produced by the kamma. **Because beings cannot discard or relinquish such *akusala kamma*, these kamma cannot help but produce resultants.** These kamma continue to produce resultants such that these beings are unable to achieve their release from the hell existences. To this extent is *sakkaya-ditthi* profoundly evil and erroneous.**

Attachment

Tanha develops an attachment for all the phenomena in the three spheres of existence in the form '**It is my property**'. *Mana* develops an attachment, for them in the form '**It is I**'. In the case of beings possessing *sakkaya-ditthi*, *tanha* and *mana* follow the lead given by *sakkaya-ditthi*. In the case of a **stream-winner, once-returner** or **non-returner** who has rid himself of *sakkaya-ditthi*, *tanha* and *mana* cease to exist in him. **Thus, *akusala kamma* totally ceases with the disappearance of *sakkaya-ditthi*.**

That, is the essence of Anatta Lakkhana Tote.

Source - <http://www.webcom.com/imcuk/ledi/MANUAL10.html>

Reference - Realization of Anattanisamsa by **The Venerable Mahathera Ledi Sayadaw**, Agga Mahapandita D. Litt. (Being an extract from Anatta Dipani, translated by U Sein Nyo Tun, I.C.S. Retd.)

I will present the Dhammapada Verse to illustrate how Anatta plays an important role in one's life career through the Samsara.

The Story of Thera Nanda

While residing at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi, the Buddha uttered Verses (13) and (14), with reference to Thera Nanda, a cousin of the Buddha.

Once, the Buddha was residing at the Veluvana monastery in Rajagaha when his father King Suddhodana repeatedly sent messengers to the Buddha requesting him to visit the city of Kapilavatthu. Accordingly, the Buddha made the journey in the company of twenty thousand arahats. On arrival at Kapilavatthu he related the Vessantara Jataka to the assembly of his relatives. On the second day, he entered the city, where by reciting the verse beginning with "Uttitthe Nappamajjeyya..." (i.e., One should arise and should not be unmindful...) he caused his father to be established in Sotapatti Fruition. On arrival at the palace, the Buddha recited another verse beginning with "Dhammam care sucaritam..." (i. e., One should practice the Dhamma...) and established the king in Sakadagami Fruition.* After the meal he narrated the Candakinnari Jataka, with reference to the virtues of Rahula's mother.

On the third day, there was the marriage ceremony of Prince Nanda, a cousin of the Buddha. The Buddha went there for alms and handed over the alms bowl to Prince Nanda. The Buddha then departed without taking back the bowl. So the prince, holding the bowl, had to follow the Buddha. The bride, Princess Janapadakalyani, seeing the prince following the Buddha rushed forth and cried out to the prince to come back soon. At the monastery, the prince was admitted into the Order as a bhikkhu.

Later, the Buddha moved into the monastery built by Anathapindika, at Jeta Park in Savatthi. While residing there Nanda was discontented and half-hearted and found little pleasure in the life of a bhikkhu. He wanted to return to the life of a householder because he kept on remembering the words of Princess Janapadakalyani, imploring him to return soon.

Knowing this, the Buddha, by supernormal power, showed Nanda, the beautiful female devas of the Tavatimsa world who were far prettier than Princess Janapadakalyani. He promised to get them for Nanda, if the latter strove hard in the practice of the Dhamma. Other bhikkhus ridiculed Nanda by saying that he was like a hireling who practiced the Dhamma for the sake of beautiful women, etc. Nanda felt very much tormented and ashamed. So, in seclusion, he tried very hard in the practice of the Dhamma and eventually attained arahatship. As an arahat his mind was totally released from all attachments, and the Buddha was also released from his promise to Nanda. All this had been fore seen by the Buddha right from the very beginning.

Other bhikkhus, having known that Nanda was not happy in the life of a bhikkhu, again asked him how he was faring. When he answered that **he had no more attachments to the life of a householder**, they thought Nanda was not speaking the truth. So they informed the Buddha about the matter, at the same time expressing their doubts. The Buddha then explained to them that, previously, the nature of Nanda was like that of an ill-roofed house, but now, it had grown to be like a well-roofed one.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 13: Just as rain penetrates a badly-roofed house, so also, passion (raga) penetrates a mind not cultivated in Tranquility and Insight Development (Samatha and Vipassana).

Verse 14. Just as rain cannot penetrate a well-roofed house, so also, passion (raga) cannot penetrate a mind well-cultivated in Tranquility and Insight Development (Samatha and Vipassana).

*** Sakadagami Fruition: Sakadagami Phala, 'fruit or 'fruition'. This immediately follows Sakadagami Magga, which is the second Magga or the second stage of Enlightenment attained by one who has practiced Insight Meditation.**

Ananta Metta
Maung Paw

