

## THE RELEVANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE TO MODERN WORLD

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### ABSTRACT

Gautama Buddha delivered His teachings in the form of dhamma & vinaya. The collection of His all the teachings are known as Pāli Tipiṭaka literature, compiled in Pāli language and the practice of these holy teachings can eradicate one's all mental defilements. The entire Pāli Tipiṭaka literature explains how to be free from sufferings for the realization of nibbāna, considered as the ultimate goal of human life. It explains Buddhism and is considered as the greatest source of wisdom having religious, philosophical, psychological, historical, social, ethical, and geographical significance which is remarkable as well as relevant to modern era.

**KEYWORDS:** Pāli Tipiṭaka literature, buddhavaṇa, Theravada Buddhism, morality, mental discipline, wisdom, human welfare, universal brotherhood, society, equality, women empowerment, freedom of thinking, human rights, interfaith understanding, economical thoughts, philosophical teachings, environmental protection.

### INTRODUCTION

Gautama Buddha preached His dhamma for the welfare of humanity and the collection of His teachings are known as buddhavaṇa including the teachings of His chief disciples approved and appreciated by Gautama Buddha Himself. Pāli is the greatest medium to understand the teachings of Gautama Buddha in its real form as Pāli means the language of Theravada Buddhism.

The Pāli term 'Tipiṭaka' is made of two terms 'Ti' and 'Piṭaka'. Here 'Ti' means three and 'Piṭaka' means basket or vessel. So, 'Tipiṭaka' may be translated as three baskets. These three baskets consist of three types of the teachings of Gautama Buddha. The three sections of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature are known as the Vinayaṭaka (the Discipline), the Suttaṭaka (the Discourse), and the Abhidhammaṭaka (the Ultimate Doctrine).

The Vinayaṭaka is the first part of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature. It deals with the rules and regulations of the Order of Buddhist monks and nuns. It describes the gradual development of Buddhism (buddhasāsana or dispensation). It describes the discipline of Buddhism to the followers, so can be addressed as the constitution of Buddhist order. It is a unique source to know about the biography of Gautama Buddha, the gradual development of Buddhist saṅgha, discipline of Buddhist order etc. It gives valuable information about ancient history, society, customs, arts, science and geographical condition of India. Till twenty years of His enlightenment, Gautama Buddha did not form any rules for Buddhist monks and nuns, but when situation demanded then He made some rules for the removal of such problems in Buddhist saṅgha. The rules of vinaya are essential for the purity of Buddhist saṅgha. The Vinayaṭaka consists of the five books which are known as the Pārājikā-Pāli (Major Offences), the Pācittiya-Pāli (Minor Offences), the Mahāvagga-Pāli (Greater Section), the Cullavagga-Pāli (Smaller Section), and the Parivāra-Pāli (Epitome of the Vinaya).

The Suttapiṭaka is the second part of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature and addressed as Suttantapiṭaka also. It consists of discourses delivered by Gautama Buddha or His chief disciples on various occasions and is easy to be understood by common people. It is full of such discourses which are very helpful for the achievement of peaceful human life. It helps to know about the great personality of Gautama Buddha & His teachings as well as the biographies of monks, nuns & lay devotees which inspire us to be good human being also teaches the lesson of humanity. It describes conventional teaching (vohāra-desanā). It consists of the five nikāyas or sections which are known as the Dīghanikāya (Collection of Long Discourses), the Majjhimanikāya (Collection of Middle-length Discourses), the Saṃyuttanikāya (Collection of Kindred Sayings), the Aṅguttaranikāya (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with number), and the Khuddakanikāya (Smaller Collection). Again the Khuddakanikāya is a collection of the fifteen books which are known as the Khuddakapāṭha (Shorter Texts), the Dhammapada (The Way of Truth), the Udāna (Heartfelt sayings or Paeons of Joy), the Itivuttaka ("Thus said" Discourses), the Suttanipāta (Collected Discourses), the Vimānavatthu (Stories of Celestial Mansions), the Petavatthu (Stories of Petas), the Theragāthā (Psalms of the Brethren), the Therīgāthā (Psalms of the Sisters), the Jātaka (Birth Stories), the Niddesa (Expositions), the Paṭisambhidāmagga (Analytical Knowledge), the Apadāna (Lives of Saints), the Buddhavaṃsa (The History of Buddha), and the Cariyā-Piṭaka (Modes of Conduct).

The Abhidhammapiṭaka is the third part of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature. It is the most important and interesting part of Gautama Buddha's teachings. Abhidhamma means higher teaching or special teaching. It describes the profound philosophy of Gautama Buddha. The subject matter of the Abhidhammapiṭaka is four ultimate things (paramattha-dhammā) which are known citta (consciousness), cetasika (mental states), rūpa (matter), and nibbāna (salvation). The Abhidhammapiṭaka consists of seven books which are known as the Dhammasaṅgaṇi (Enumeration of Phenomena), the Vibhaṅga (The Book of the Treatises), the Dhātukathā (Discussion with reference to Elements), the Puggalapaññatti (Description of Individuals), the Kathāvatthu (Point of Controversy), the Yamaka (The Book of Pairs), and the Paṭṭhāna (The Book of Relations). In this way, we find that the entire Pāli Tipiṭaka literature is a collection of thirty-one texts. The significance of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature may be understood in the following ways:

## **HUMAN WELFARE AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli literature is full of the concept of human welfare, essential for all the human beings of this world. Gautama Buddha delivered the dhamma to spread happiness, peace, and joy in all over the world. In His teachings, He focused on the practice of ethics, which helps to promote humanity. The concept of human welfare was taught by Gautama Buddha for the establishment of equality, freedom, brotherhood, justice and education in society. He has preached for the welfare of all living beings without making any discrimination of caste, color, county, and gender. He ordered to monks to establish happiness among whole world. In the Vinayapiṭaka, He advised to monks that caratha bhikkhave, cārikaṃ bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ. Desetha, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ ādikalyāṇaṃ majjhakalyāṇaṃ pariyośanakalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ sabyatjanaṃ kevalaparipuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmcariyaṃ pakāsetha.<sup>2</sup> Walk, monks, on tour for the blessings of the manyfolk, for the happiness of the manyfolk out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of devas and men. Let not two (of you) go by one (way). Monks, teach the dhamma which is lovely at beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the ending. Explain with the spirit and the letter the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled, wholly pure.<sup>3</sup>

## UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played unique role in the establishment of universal brotherhood in this universe. Everyone wants to live peacefully and happy in this society with his dignity. No one wants to face problems in life. Gautama Buddha was very much aware to provide all kinds of peace and happiness to living beings. In the Daṇḍavagga of the Dhammapada, He says:

*Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa sabbe bhāyanti maccuno.*

*Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye.*

*Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa sabbesaṃ jīvitam piyaṃ.*

*Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye.*

All tremble at the rod (punishment). All fear death. Comparing others with oneself, one should neither strike nor cause to strike. All tremble at the rod (punishment). Life is dear to all. Comparing others with oneself, one should neither strike nor cause to strike.<sup>4</sup>

To establish universal brotherhood, the practice of loving kindness is very essential. Without it, peace and happiness cannot be established in this world. One, who practices universal brotherhood, can realize the feeling of other living beings. In the Mettasutta, Gautama Buddha says that one should think in such way that may all beings be happy, may all beings be secure, may all beings be happy. He must radiate the measureless thoughts of loving kindness to whatever living beings there may be; feeble or strong, tall, medium or short, small, medium or large, thin, medium or short, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are to be born - may all beings, without exception, be happy. In the Mettasutta<sup>5</sup>, He says:

*Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttamāyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe.*

*Evaṃ pi sabbabhūtesu mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimānaṃ.*

*Mettaṃ ca sabba-lokasmim mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimānaṃ*

*Uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyaṃ ca asambādhaṃ averaṃ asapattaṃ.*

As a mother protects her own (only) child even at the risk of her life, similarly let him (also) cultivate an unbounded mind (good will) towards all (creatures). Let him cultivate this unbounded mind (good will) towards (the beings of) all the worlds (existing), upward, downward, and across, unobstructed, with no malice or foe.

Hatred is barrier in the establishment of universal peace. To remove war, unhappiness, and problems, he wanted to spread loving kindness. One should develop loving kindness, compassion, pity, joyous love to understand feelings of other living beings. By developing loving kindness, one should be free from hatred, ill-will, and envy. He gave the message of loving kindness to this world for the achievement of peaceful and happy life. It is very essential for the removal of hatreds. In the Yamakavagga of the Dhammapada, He says:

*Nahi verena verāni sammantīdha kudācanaṃ.*

*Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo sanantano.*

*Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone do they cease. This is an eternal law.<sup>6</sup>*

## SOCIETY AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played unique role in the establishment of an ideal society. Gautama Buddha wanted to establish an ideal society free from all problems, so He tried to stop contemporary bad and dangerous customs like caste system, untouchability, social discrimination, slavery system because the practice of these rituals produce the social and economic problems. In the Vasalasutta of the Suttanipāta, He says:

*Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo.*

*Kammanā vasalo hoti, kammanā hoti brāhmaṇo.*

*Not by birth is one an outcast; not by birth is one a Brahmin.*

*By deed one becomes an outcast, by deed one becomes a Brahmin.<sup>7</sup>*

According to Him, caste system is a barrier to provide equal facility to all. As per the description of the Vasalasutta, the Vāseṭṭhasutta<sup>8</sup>, the Aggaññasutta, and the Ambaṭṭhasutta, He has rejected the existence of caste system. He gave more importance to good karma to be a good person. He tried to establish freedom, equality, fraternity, humanity, peace, and happiness in this society by opposing harmful and dangerous customs.

According to the Brahmajālasutta<sup>9</sup> (Discourse on the Net of Perfect Wisdom) of Dīghanikāya, the common people used to appreciate the Buddha because of His morality. Gautama Buddha abstains from the acceptance of women and maidens. He abstains from the acceptance of male and female slaves. He was not in favor of slavery also opposed to earn money by involving in prostitution and selling of females. It is a dangerous and unwholesome deed for the destruction of society. Because of it, ethical and moral values are reducing from society, and unethical deeds are increasing in social system. It is responsible for many other dangerous and harmful problems. So, one should not promote wrong livelihood. Every person should follow moral ethics, avoid involving in unwholesome deed of prostitution. It is a big reason of human's downfall. In the Parābhavasutta of the Suttanipāta, He says:

*Itthidhutto surādhutto, akkhadhutto ca yo naro.*

*Laddhaṃ laddhaṃ vināseti, taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ.*

*Sehi dārehi asantuṭṭho, vesiyāsu padissati.*

*Dissati paradāresu, taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ.<sup>10</sup>*

A man who is debauch, a drunkard, a gambler and who squanders whatever he possess - this is the cause of one's downfall. Not contented with one's wives, if one is seen amongst courtesans and the wives of others - this is the cause of one's downfall.

In the noble eightfold path, Gautama Buddha taught the doctrine of sammā-ājīva which means right livelihood or right living. By abandoning wrong livelihood, a noble person, who survives by good and blameless income, is called right livelihood. He preached to human beings not to involve in five kinds of business like trading in other living beings for slaughtering, trading in weapons, trading in flesh by causing the slaughter of animals, trading in intoxicating drinks and drugs, and trading in poison. He says that kañcimā, bhikkhave, vaṇijjā upāsakena akaraṇīyā. Katamā pañca? Sattavaṇijjā, sattavaṇijjā, maṃsavaṇijjā, majjavaṇijjā, visavaṇijjā ti.<sup>11</sup> A lay follower should not engage in five types of business. Which five? Business in weapons, business in human beings (living beings), business in meat, business in intoxicants and business in poison.

To establish social equality and social harmony, Gautama Buddha promoted and appreciated right livelihood in society. In the Kūṭadantasutta, He says that person should earn his livelihood through right way. In the name of religion and rituals, one should not kill animals. One should not promote slavery. One should have good relationship with servants and slaves. One should not harm them. Being an owner, one should earn money by reducing their profits. It is also wrong livelihood. According to their physical exercise, one should pay money to one's employees and servants. People are not ready to practice right livelihood. In absence of right livelihood, a lot of problems, inequality, slavery, prostitution come to existence in society destroying freedom, peace, and social harmony from society. In the Kūṭadantasutta, He suggested not to misbehave with slaves. Regard and respect should be given to them also, because they are human beings. They have right to live properly in this earth. In the name of religion and rituals, one should not kill animals or harm them. Being an owner, one should earn money by reducing their profits. According to their physical exercise, one should pay money to one's employees and servants. He has very soft corner towards slaves. Because of His good attitude and teaching, Puṇṇā changed her bad life, full of suffering and torture. By accepting His shelter, she became Buddhist nun, and she got salvation, considered as nirvana. In the same way Sunīta, who was a scavenger of Rajgiri city during His period, became a Buddhist monk, and finally he got salvation. For mental purification, He gave more importance to virtue, good deeds, right vision, and righteousness. He says:

*Kammaṃ vijjā ca dhammo ca sīlaṃ jīvitamuttamaṃ*

*Etena maccā sujjhanti na gotten vā dhanena vā.12*

*By deeds, vision and righteousness,*

*By virtue, the sublimest life*

*By these are mortals purified,*

*And not by lineage (ancestry) and wealth.13*

## **EQUALITY AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

According to Buddhism, all men are equal. All are subject to the same law of nature. All are subject to birth, old age, and death. The law of karma is binding everyone. Everyone reaps what he sows. Everyone is equal by birth. Any kinds of discrimination cannot be found between Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. There is no discrimination in the process of taking birth. In the Assalāyanasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, Gautama Buddha has declared this truth that every human being is same based on the process of taking birth in this universe. Caste system is man-made. This discrimination is made by human beings for their personal gain. But in real sense, there is no discrimination among people. This is reason; He opposed the existence of caste system, a barrier in the development of human beings. To establish equality, He has opposed slavery system also. He wanted to eliminate this bad custom which is a barrier in human equality and respect.

## **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played unique role in the empowerment of women. It is true that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, who was the aunt & foster mother of Gautama, took initiative for the formation of bhikkhunī saṅgha. For this pious purpose, she went to Gautama Buddha and requested Him on behalf of her and five hundred Shakya princess. To establish bhikkhunī saṅgha, His attendant and half-brother Ānanda also played an important role. He asked the Buddha to consider

how kind and helpful his foster mother had been to him. Lord, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was of great help to you, she is your aunt and your foster mother. She gave you her milk after your mother's death. Then, Gautama Buddha decided to allow women to become nuns and instructed that the woman would have to accept eight heavy rules to get ordination as a nun. He said: "Ānanda, if Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī accepts eight vows of respect that will be her higher ordination (upasampadā)". By making these eight extreme rules, his intention was not to humiliate woman, but to give one kind of protection to nuns. Hence, these rules should not be considered the barriers for women. He wanted to uplift the miserable condition of women in society so He provided an opportunity to practice spiritual life. He has said that like man, any woman can get salvation as she is equally capable to achieve spiritual life. This is the reason; He established Buddhist Order for nuns. Many nuns have preached holy teachings also. The contribution of Buddhist nuns can be studied in the Therīgāthā, an important text of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature.

### **FREEDOM OF THINKING AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played an important role in providing freedom of thinking to this world. According to it, person should think freely. Gautama Buddha wanted to provide different kinds of freedom in life to His followers. He has given freedom to think on religious, spiritual, social, economical, cultural, educational, and political issues. He did not teach even a single line of dhamma by force. His teachings never imposed on weapon and wealth. He suggested His followers to follow it after having proper understanding. If there is any teaching, which is not good, should be rejected and if there is any teaching, which is good, should be followed or accepted. Acceptance of significant teachings could make a person free from many dogmas, superstitions, bad rites, and dangerous ceremonies. This is the reason; He has given more importance to right understanding in His teachings.

Gautama Buddha gave appropriate and scientific guidelines for every intellectual. He advised followers not to believe anything without considering it properly. Buddhists are advised to accept religious practices only after careful observation and analysis. He was impartial regarding his own teachings. On one incident, a group of young people called the Kalamas approached him and complained that they are confused because every teacher they went, claimed that he alone is confidential to the truth while everyone else is a fraud or a liar. They asked Him to teach them how to recognize a true religion. He has given unique answer in the form of the Kālāmasutta<sup>14</sup>, which is called by impartial thinkers as the charter of religious freedom. He said that *etha tumhe kālāmā mā anussavena mā paramparāya mā iti kiriya mā piṭakasampadānena mā takkahetu mā nayahetu mā ākārāparivitakkena mā diṭṭhinijjhānkhantya mā bhabbarūpatāya mā samaṇo no garūti, yadā tumhe kālāmā attanāva jāneyyātha ime dhamma kusalā, ime dhammā sāvajjā, ime dhammā viṭṭugarahitā, ime dhammā samattā samādinna ahitāya dukkhāya saṅvattanti - atha tumhe kālāmā pajaheyyātha.*<sup>15</sup> It is proper for you, Kālāmas, to doubt, to be uncertain, do not be led by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Do not be led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances; or by delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea, is this ascetic our teacher. But rather, when you yourselves know (that) certain things are unwholesome and wrong, (that such) things are censured by the wise and when undertaken, such things lead to harm, (then) abandon them. And when you yourselves know (that) certain things are wholesome and good, (that such) things are approved by the wise and when undertaken such things lead to benefit and happiness, (then) enter on and abide in them.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

The basic human rights have been declared by Gautama Buddha in the 6th century B.C. They are included in all declarations of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. In fact, they are the foundation on which the United Nations' structure has been built. He gave more importance to equality, freedom, and universal brotherhood. The concept of human rights can be found in these three points which are source of happiness for all living beings. His ethical principles played very significant role in the development of human rights. According to His teachings, everyone is equal; each has the potential to realize the truth by one's own will and attempt also can help others to realize it.

To establish fundamental rights of all human beings, Gautama Buddha taught morality, mental concentration, and wisdom without thinking about caste, color, language. He has opened His door of dhamma for salvation to everyone. He tried to remove the existence of caste and slavery system from society to provide fundamental rights of all human beings and to establish social equality and peace, He gave theory of live and let live. In the name of the Kālāmasutta, He has given freedom of thinking, gave more preference to education, which very essential in the mental development, spiritual development, social development, economical development, cultural development, and political development.

The heart of Gautama Buddha was full of boundless loving kindness and compassion for all living beings. According to Him everyone has right to live properly and peacefully. He wants to give same rights to everyone. Nowadays aware people make efforts to provide proper shelter to beggars, scavengers, prostitutes, criminals, and mentally & physically persons. But, He has played remarkable role to provide appropriate place to such people six century ago. He has shown right way of salvation to Sāriputta Brahmin. In the light of right path, Upāli barber abandoned his traditional job and became Buddhist monk. After getting salvation, he became great scholar of vinaya (Buddhist discipline), received good name & fame in the society by everyone. Sunīta was a scavenger at His time. After getting inspiration and guidance, he got salvation, which was not allowed for him as a scavenger. He became a respectable personality for everyone. The Buddha tried to give proper place to Dacoit Aṅgulimāla, who has killed many people. He has shown him the holy path of loving kindness and helped him to become a kind Buddhist monk. Ambapāli was a beautiful dancer. She became Buddhist nun by accepting His teachings and got salvation. Teachings and freedom of the Buddha enabled her to establish herself in society. Puṇṇā was a female slave. After adopting His teachings, she got respect and appropriate position in society. Paṭācārā was married woman. She lost her whole family and became mentally upset and mad. Gautama Buddha provided proper place to her in society and tried His best to give fundamental rights to everyone. According to Him, they have equal rights to get salvation and happiness. He has established Buddhist Order for monks and nuns which played an important role in the development of human rights.

## INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

Buddhism is known as teaching of peace and social harmony. Buddhism promotes the better understanding of other religions & their beliefs. The meaning of religion is a discipline, which allows a person to support and respect one's own beliefs with understanding, mutual co-operation with friendliness towards other religions to achieve religious harmony. Gautama Buddha compared His doctrine to a raft, which one uses to cross over a lake or stream, but is left behind when one reaches beach. It would make no sense to continue carrying the raft after once it had served its purpose.

Gautama Buddha taught how to live and let live. In the history of the world, there is no evidence to show that Buddhists have interfered or done any damage to any other religion in any part of the world for the purpose of introducing



their religion. Buddhists do not look the existence of other religions as a barrier to worldly progress and peace. Buddhist missionaries spread His noble message in a peaceful and respectable way, but they did not compete with other religionists in converting people. Based on ill will, Buddhist missionary or monk did not preach anything. The world has suffered enough from the disease of dogmatism, blind beliefs, and intolerance. Buddhism did not interfere with the national traditions and customs, art and culture of any country. Buddhism developed in Japan and Tibet, but it did not disturb local customs and rituals. The message of loving kindness and compassion opened the hearts of people and they willingly accepted the teachings, thereby helping Buddhism to become a world religion. Buddhist missionaries were invited by independent countries which welcomed them with due respect. Buddhism was never introduced to any country through the influence of royalty or any other political power.

Gautama Buddha wanted to establish universal peace, happiness, social harmony, universal brotherhood, rationalism, democracy, morality, equality, brotherhood, self-respect, freedom, loving kindness, compassion, welfare, and happiness of mankind in this world. This is the reason; He gave more importance to morality, concentration, and wisdom. He introduced this teaching for people to practice with human dignity. He says that a proper religion should be full of peaceful messages and teachings. Every religion should encourage respect for another religion. Every religion should teach loving kindness towards other religions and their followers.

### **LITERARY IMPORTANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played unique role in the development of world literature. It is the collection of the teachings of the Buddha. All the teachings of the Buddha can be divided into three parts which are considered as the Vinayaṭiṭaka, the Suttaṭiṭaka, and the Abhidhammaṭiṭaka. After the compilation of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature, a lot of books have been written by Buddhist scholars and monks. To explain the subject matter of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature, the development of Pāli literature took place. As we know that Pāli Tipiṭaka literature is base for other literature of Theravada Buddhism. Excluding the thirty-one texts of Pāli Tipiṭaka literature, the remaining texts, which have been written based on Pāli Tipiṭaka literature, are known as Non-Canonical literature or Post-Canonical literature. It is true that Non-Canonical literature was written to explain the teachings of Gautama Buddha and can be classified into different groups like Pāli Anuṭiṭaka literature, Pāli Aṭṭhakathā literature, Pāli Sāra literature, Pāli Vaṃsa literature, Pāli Kāvya literature, Pāli Vyākaraṇa literature, Pāli Chanda literature, Pāli Alaṅkāra literature, Pāli Kosa literature, and miscellaneous texts.

### **ECONOMICAL IMPORTANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played unique role in the development of economical thoughts. Buddhism gave the doctrine of right livelihood and explanation of Buddhist economic thoughts in the form of economic theory. Gautama Buddha has given valuable economic theory for happy human life. He appreciated the concept of right livelihood. It means that one should earn a living without violating these principles of moral conduct. Buddhists are discouraged from being engaged in the following five kinds of livelihood: trading in other living beings for slaughtering, trading in weapons, trading in flesh by causing the slaughter of animals, trading in intoxicating drinks and drugs, and trading in poison. He says that the way of our earning should be very innocent and blameless. Money should not be earned through unethical or unrighteous means. He teaches his disciples to avoid harmful and bad occupation or job. It should not be a cause of harm and suffering to other living beings. The disciple should earn a living in an honest, harmless, and peaceful way.



Wealth should be earned by mental, verbal, and physical work. One should use such money in proper way. One should not use such money which is earned by bad sources and if this money is used it will surely create bad results in life. To be free from such bad results and to dwell in happiness, and peacefully, one should follow right livelihood in one's daily life. The Buddha also says that a person, who wants to live peacefully, should avoid deceitfulness, hypocrisy, high pressure salesmanship, and trickery, or any kind of dishonest way of acquiring means of support. This is the reason; He suggested not surviving by doing any bad deed. One should avoid wrong livelihood like practicing dishonesty, cheating, treachery, soothsaying, trickery, and usury. Way of livelihood should not be responsible for anyone's suffering. One should not violate anyone's freedom, mental peace, and virtue. One should not earn money from any bad sources, which are responsible for social problems, political problems, terrorism, social disorder, and disturbance. For the sake of happy life and one's livelihood, one should not blame, deceive, cheat, comment, flatter, and earn from one profit to other profit. According to Buddhism, it is not accepted as right livelihood. It is also a wrong and harmful livelihood. These manners of earnings are also dangerous for humanity, so anyone should not use such mean methods or manners in daily life. One should use blameless and innocent method of earning to survive. Livelihood should not be blamed by human beings, society, and dhamma. This idea should be kept in the minds of saints as well as the persons, and it should be practiced properly. In the Pupphavagga of the Dhammapada, He says:

*Yathāpi bhamaro puphaṃ vaṇṇagandaṃ aheṭṭhayaṃ,*

*Paleti rasamādāya evaṃ gāme munīcare.*

As a bee without harming the flower, its colour or scent, flies away, collecting only the honey, even so should the sage wander in the village (without affecting the faith and generosity or wealth of the villagers).<sup>16</sup>

It is known by everyone that a lot of problems and crimes are arising due to poverty. Lack of basic three things like food, clothe, and house, people are involving in wrong livelihood. Gautama Buddha says that basic things should be provided by kings and government to needy person. In the Kūṭadantasutta, He says how to raise the social and economic conditions of a country. He suggests and preaches to kings that the farmers and traders should be given the necessary facilities to carry on their farming and business, and that people should be paid adequate wages. Thus when they have enough for their substance and are economically secure, crime would be less and peace and harmony prevail.

One should earn wealth through proper ways. In the same way, one should spend one's wealth in proper and wholesome activities. One should not invest one's money to do any bad deeds. One should use it for parents, wife, children, workers, servants, relatives, friends, and colleagues. One should donate to needful persons. One should use for the five kinds of offerings: to relatives, guests, ancestors, the king, and the religious personalities. But one should not utilize one's money for womanizing, drunkenness, gambling, and evil friendship. These deeds lead to suffering and one cannot get happiness in one's life, so use up of wealth should be done wisely. To be happy, one should be free from debt in life, means one should earn and save some money for good future. If one's income is based on right livelihood, one's life can be source of blamelessness, and one can enjoy it.

The practice of moral values helps in the protection and the proper utilization of wealth. This is the reason; Gautama Buddha emphasized on morality for common person. His teachings spread peace of mind for lay devotees in society. He suggested following five precepts in their daily life. He says that alcohol and other intoxicants is root of all evils. Because of it, human life becomes full of sufferings. In the Dhammapada, He says that he, who destroys life, tells

lies, takes what is not given, commits adultery and is addicted to intoxicating drinks, digs in his own roots even in this very life.<sup>17</sup>

## RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature is main source to know Buddhism and its religious thoughts taught by Gautama Buddha. He taught dhamma to establish humanity in this world. He explained all the teachings in the form of sīla (morality), samādhi (mental discipline), and paññā (wisdom). In the Buddhavagga of the Dhammapada, He says that not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas.<sup>18</sup> By practicing the teachings of sīla, samādhi, and paññā, one can be free from one's sufferings and problems of life. In the Visuddhimagga, Acharya Buddhaghosh says that sīla, samādhi, and paññā are three steps of the stair which leads to the holy city of nibbāna. So, without travelling these three steps, one cannot get final goal of human life. In the Jaṭāsutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya, He says:

*Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño cittaṃ paññañca bhāvayaṃ.*

*Ātāpī nipako bhikkhu so imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭaṃ ti.<sup>19</sup>*

*When a wise man, established well in virtue,*

*Develops consciousness and understanding,*

*Then as a bhikkhu ardent and sagacious*

*He succeeds in disentangling this tangle.<sup>20</sup>*

## POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has political importance. During His teachings, Gautama Buddha has taught many valuable teachings to many kings like King Prasenjit, King Bimbisara, and King Ajatsattu. It is true that Gautama Buddha was not a political leader, but He gave many valuable teachings to kings to be a good ruler or administrator. According to Buddhism, the ruler or administrator ought to rule righteously (dhammena) and not un-righteously (a-dhammena). Ruler or a king ought to follow 'ten duties of the king' (dasa rāja dhamma). In the Cakkavattisīhanādasutta, He has advised that a good ruler, should act impartially without being biased and should avoid discrimination between one particular group of subjects against another; he should not harbor any form of hatred against any of his subjects; he should show no fear whatsoever in the enforcement of the law, if it is justifiable. A good ruler must possess a clear understanding of the law to be enforced. It should not be enforced just because the ruler has the authority to enforce the law. It must be done in a reasonable manner and with common sense.<sup>21</sup> The ten duties of the king are known as generosity in giving (dāna), morality (sīla), self-sacrifice or unselfishness (pariccāga), honesty (ajjava), gentleness (maddava), not being given to luxurious living or self-restraint (tapa), no anger (akkodha), no violence (avihiṃsā), patience (khanti) and agreeability (avirodha).<sup>22</sup> Pāli Tipiṭaka literature gave a unique and useful guideline for rulers or kings to rule the country very peacefully.

## PHILOSOPHICAL IMPORTANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE

Pāli Tipiṭaka literature has played unique role to preserve philosophical teachings of Gautama Buddha who preached spirituality in His discourses. The teachings of morality, concentration, and wisdom are the base of His spiritual teachings. His important doctrines are known as cattāri ariyasaccāni (the four noble truths), ariyo-aṭṭhaṅgiko-maggo (the

noble eightfold path), paṭiccasamuppāda (the theory of dependent origination), the bodhipakkhiya-dhammā (thirty seven things pertaining to enlightenment), tilakkhaṇaṃ (three characteristics of existence), pāramī (perfection), brahmavihāra bhāvanā<sup>23</sup> (the four sublime states), kammavāda, freedom of thinking, paramattha dhammā (the four ultimate truths), nibbāna (salvation) etc. Having understood and practiced these teachings, one can reach to the highest spirituality and realize the salvation which is considered as the final goal of human life.

## **HISTORICAL & GEOGRAPHICAL IMPORTANCE OF PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli Tipitaka literature has its historical & geographical importance. It preserved much information about our country of 6th century. It gives descriptive information of our ancient history also provides the geographical conditions of that era. It gives valuable information about historical kings. The Aṅguttaranikāya is a unique source to know about the historical status of India. It gives valuable and authentic information about ancient India's sixteen mahājanapadas which were known as Anga, Assaka, Avanti, Chedi, Gandhara, Kamboj, Kashi, Kosala, Kuru, Magadha, Malla, Matsya, Panchala, Surasena, Vajji and Amsa or Vatsa. Buddhist texts give information about big cities of ancient India and description of their democratic systems also.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL THOUGHTS AND PALI TIPITAKA LITERATURE**

Pāli Tipitaka literature has played a significant role in the environmental protection. Buddhism appreciates the doctrine of right livelihood to protect the nature and its preservation; it should be practiced to save our environmental resources and its constituents like plants, animals, rivers, mountains etc., as it is very essential for environmental protection. The lesson of non-violence is very supportive in nature protection and discourages the practice of the wrong sacrifices responsible for destruction of nature. The practice of the loving kindness is essential to protect animal & other creatures. The provision and practice of the vassāvāsa (retreat) is very helpful in the guard of physical environment. Buddhism encourages the doctrine of 'live and let live' to save and balance this nature for the sake of humanity.

By controlling the activities of body, speech and mind, a good environment can be established. A good environment with real dhamma can be helpful to get success in social life, economic life, and spiritual life. If the teachings of Gautama Buddha are propagated properly, the problem of environmental destruction can be minimized. Because of ignorance & wickedness, people are destroying nature and its beauty. This is the reason; there is the need for environmental education. It is mandatory to control greed for protection of our environment and this education should be given since childhood so that the coming generations could develop the compassion toward all the animals and natural resources. There is need of the Buddha not war in current era. He did not take favor of destruction of nature or any living being of this world. He was very conscious towards the protection of nature. The teachings of Gautama Buddha are very relevant and helpful for the removal of environmental crisis. The theory of 'live and let live' should be followed by whole world.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Pāli Tipitaka literature focuses on the establishment of freedom, equality, and fraternity in this world. It has focused and given distinctive guideline to all subjects helpful for the achievement of peaceful and happy human life. It has contributed in the field of ethics, spirituality, philosophy, psychology, economics, politics, literature, environment, history, geography etc. Having practiced the teachings of Buddhism found in Pāli Tipitaka literature, one can find the permanent solution to the problems of human life and its importance cannot be denied in present era. Hence, the importance of Pāli Tipitaka literature is remarkable, and it cannot be ignored by modern world.

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