

The Path to Disentangle Inside & Outside Tangles

Jaṭā Sutta

(*Samyutta Nikāya I, Brāhmana samyutta*, 294 p)

All Buddhist teachings focus on how to achieve real happiness overcoming all kinds of sufferings. While the Buddha was investigating the path to liberation, he always found how to overcome suffering. After he attained the final bliss of liberation, he tried to preach this enlightenment path to the world with great compassion.

Liberation or getting rid of suffering depends on reducing three unwholesome mental states which are craving, anger and delusion. Craving and anger can be reduced for a long time according to the guidance of other religions too. However, complete eradication of craving and anger depends on getting rid of delusion completely. Hence Buddhism always points out the path to overcome delusion. The discourse of Jata very clearly explains the path how to solve our internal and external problems. Learning this discourse we are able to understand the clear path what we practice to overcome suffering completely. The Path to Purification, *Visuddhimagga*, one of the main Buddhist meditation books which was written by Ven. Buddhaghosa 1400 years ago written is based on this discourse. Hence this discourse is highly praised by Buddhist followers in Theravada Buddhist countries.

Once upon a time, when the Buddha was at Savatti, a Brahman, named Jata came to the Buddha. After exchanging greetings with the Buddha, he sat beside the Buddha. As he was sitting there, he addressed the Buddha with a stanza:

*Antojaṭā bahijaṭā Jaṭāya jaṭitā pajā,
Taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi Ko imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭan”ti.*
“A tangle (knot) inside, a tangle outside,
These people are entangled in a tangle.
I ask you this, O Gotama,
Who can disentangle this tangle?”

As the answer for the question of the Brahman, the Buddha explained these verses.

*“Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño Cittam paññañca bhāvayam;
Ātāpī nipako bhikkhu So imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭam”.*
A man established in virtue, discerning,
developing mind and wisdom,
a monk enthusiastic, astute:
he can untangle this tangle.

*"Yesam rāgo ca doso ca avijjā ca virājitā;
Khīṇāsavā arahanto tesam vijaṭitā jaṭā".*

Those whose craving, anger, & ignorance
have faded away,
arahants, their defilements ended:
for them the tangle's untangled.

*Yattha nāmañca rūpañca asesam uparujjhati;
Paṭigham rūpasaññā ca etthesā chijjate jaṭā"ti.*

Where name (mental formation or phenomena) & form,
along with contact and perception of form,
totally cease without a trace:
that's where the tangle is untangled.

According to this answer that the Buddha has given here, we can understand how to overcome tangles in our life. In the very first stanza, three disciplines are pointed out for the liberation.

They are;

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| 1. Virtue | (<i>Sīla</i>) |
| 2. Tranquility (= concentration) | (<i>Samādhi</i>) |
| 3. Wisdom | (<i>Paññā</i>) |

The very first step of getting rid of tangles is virtue. With the understanding of the Path of cessation from suffering, we form self-discipline in our speech and behavior as virtue. According to this virtue, before we do or speak something, we reflect on it again and again whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, wholesome or unwholesome. As much as we have this discipline in our speech and behavior, we have no mistakes. We can remember our life which we spent with pleasant mind because of our good behavior. This discipline in our behavior and speech helps us to go forward in the path of purification practicing meditation purifying the mind. Virtue or moral conduct is the foundation of the spiritual path. Therefore, the Buddha has mostly pointed out the importance of practicing virtue. Discipline in senses is also very important and useful for a successful moral life. Also, moral life helps us to face any society without fear and doubt. Spending a virtuous life is more beneficial in the personal life and social life as well further beneficial in this life and life after death.

The second step to overcome tangles is tranquility (or concentration). We mainly use two meditation techniques that are tranquility (or concentration) and insight meditation. In the tranquility meditation, we keep our mind with a particular good thought. Here we purify our mind from negative thoughts such as craving, anger and delusion. As a result of concentrated mind, we can live for a long time without suffering and stress, but it is not permanent and it can be changed. Here we practice and develop our awareness especially in mind and body. We

practice to do all kinds of activities mindfully. Mindfulness is one of the most important qualities that we have to develop for purification of our mind. Also, mindfulness helps us to keep our mind in the present moment. The nature of our mind is going to the past and future without awareness. By practicing tranquility meditation, we train our mind to live in the present moment with mindfulness. And when mind goes to the past or future, we are aware of the mind. There are forty techniques in Buddhism to develop mindfulness like breathing meditation, loving kindness meditation. When we practice those techniques with right understanding, we don't stop in concentration. We go forward seeing world reality as impermanence, dissatisfaction and selflessness.

In the discourse of *Jatā*, the Buddha explained the real path that leads to get rid of tangles as practicing virtue, concentration and wisdom. If we can develop these three things to the maximum level, we are clever to overcome all kinds of sufferings and lamentations. Then we are the luckiest people in the world since nobody can disturb our peace of mind. Then we have real freedom from all kinds of difficulties, problems, sufferings and tangles. For that we should try to dedicate all our efforts and energies, as much as we can.

When this was said, the brahman *Jatā Bhāradvāja* said to the Blessed One, "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. Let me obtain the going forth in Master Gotama's presence, let me obtain admission."

Then the brahman *Jatā Bhāradvāja* received the going forth & the admission in the Blessed One's presence. And not long after his admission — dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute — he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for him in the here & now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And so Ven. *Bhāradvāja* became another one of the arahants.

Before we start the spiritual journey that helps reduce ignorance, we should develop our wisdom in several steps. The very first one is the understanding of what happens to our life. Wisdom or intelligence, which mainly helps us to overcome suffering and attain liberation from defilements, is highly praised in Buddhism. The main cause of our happiness is the level of our wisdom. Our real success depends on how much we have achieved wisdom. Hence, wisdom has been compared to a gem (*Paññā narānam ratanam* = පඤ්ඤා නරානං රතනං). Wisdom brings purification (*Paññāya varisujjhati* = පඤ්ඤාය වරිසුජ්ඣති). There is no other bright light like wisdom (*Natthi paññā samā ābhā* =). Wisdom is used in several terms in Pali language such as

Sammā Ditti (සම්මා දිට්ඨි), *Paññā* (පඤ්ඤා), *Amoha* (අමෝහ). Wisdom should be increased from the beginning till the end to the maximum level of the path of enlightenment. Therefore, Buddhism always guides us to gain wisdom through all kinds of advices that the supreme Buddha explained in his entire life.

We usually experience through our senses such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. When objects such as forms, sounds, smell, taste reach our senses, we experience about the world. The nature of this experience is arising at the moment and ceasing instantly. Whatever we experience through six senses, five aggregates arise at that moment. Also, they immediately cease. Five aggregates are forms or corporeality (*Rupa*), feelings (*Vedanā*), perception (*Saññā*), mental formations (*Sankhāra*) and consciousness (*Viññāna*). These five things arise together and cease together. They cannot be divided. We learn them by intelligence. These five aggregates, six internal senses or external objects are not permanent. They arise with the conditions at the moment, and they cease immediately when conditions separate. However, because of our ignorance we think they are permanent. Only wisdom can awaken us from this delusion. The nature of all conditions is that; Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence. (*ahutvā sambhutam hutvā na bhavissati*). It means if we experience something now, it didn't happen in the past in the same way like now. As the result of reflecting on this reality again and again, we are able to reduce ignorance gradually. The more someone reduces ignorance the more he reduces craving and anger too. The more one who overcomes craving, anger and delusion, the more he disentangle tangles. This is the path to overcome tangles and suffering and to achieve the supreme bliss of liberation, *Nibbāna*.

To make this experience permanent, mindfulness should be practiced. On the path of liberation achieving wisdom, practicing mindfulness is the firm foundation which is the safe field. That is why the Buddha has highly praised the importance of practicing mindfulness as;

the one and only way (*ekāyano ayam bhikkhave maggo*);

For the purification of beings (*sattānam visuddhiyā*),

For the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation (*sokapariddavānam samatikkhamāya*),

For the destruction of pain and grief (*dukkhadomanassānam attamgamāya*),

For the gaining of knowledge (*ñāyassa adhigamāya*)

For the attaining (or realization) of Nibbana (or enlightenment) (*nibbānassa saccikiriyāya*)

which is practicing the fourfold mindfulness (*yadidam cattāro satipatthānā*).

As much as we have right understanding about the path listening to the Buddha's message, we are ready to practice other steps. Day by day we go forward in this path seeing the reality which is impermanence wisely. These eight steps consist of three disciplines those are

virtue, tranquility (or concentration) and wisdom. With the understanding of The Noble Eightfold Path, we form self-discipline in our speech and behavior. Discipline helps us to go forward in the path of purification practicing meditation. In purification of the mind, we mainly use two meditation techniques that are concentration or tranquility and insight. In the tranquility meditation, we keep our mind with a particular good thought. As a result of concentrated mind, we can live for a long time without suffering and stress, but it is not permanent and it can be changed. Here we practice and develop our awareness in our mind and body. We practice to do all kinds of activities mindfully. Mindfulness is one of the most important qualities that we have to develop for purification of our mind.

Concentration is not enough to eradicate defilements completely. That is why Buddhism explains us to develop another step that is insight meditation for permanent happiness. Here, with the concentrated mind, we reflect on the three characteristics (*Tilakkhana*) of existence of all kinds of things mental and physical.

They are;

- i. Impermanence - (*Anicca*) අනිච්ච
- ii. Unsatisfactoriness - (*Dukkha*) දුක්ඛ
- iii. Selflessness - (*Anatta*) අනත්ත

We reflect again and again on these three characteristics of existence (*Tilakkhana* - ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ). As a result of practicing this world reality, we develop wisdom with the knowledge of impermanence. Simultaneously, we develop five qualities which are confidence (*Saddā* - සද්ධා), effort (*Viriya* - විරිය), mindfulness (*Sati* - සති), concentration (*Samādhi* - සමාධි) and wisdom (*Paññā* - පඤ්ඤා). As the result of practicing The Noble Eightfold Path with mindfulness and wisdom, we gradually reach to the real happiness decreasing defilements. Finally, we are able to live in the present moment with full awareness seeing arising and ceasing without any desirable attachment or destruction. It means we have overcome dissatisfaction or suffering.



May the Triple Gem Bless you!

තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

May all beings be well happy and peaceful!

(සියලු සත්ත්වයෝ සුවපත් වෙත්වා!)