The Significant Roles of Sacca

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Abstract

The word of "Sacca" had been widely used in the field of Myanmar tradition and culture. The Majority of Myanmar people are familiar with it. But the word of "Sacca" is not a true Myanmar word. "Sacca" is a Pāli word that has been adopted as a Myanmar word. It means truthfulness. "Sacca" (truthfulness) has many kinds of usages such as Diṭṭhi sacca (truth attached to wrong belief), Brāhmaṇa sacca (Brahmana's truth), Ñāṇa sacca (Penetrating truth) and Viratī sacca (truth in avoidance of voices), according to one's point of view. But if those usages of Sacca are summarized, it should be kept in mind that there are only two views "Paramattha Sacca" cultimate truth) and "Sammuti Sacca" (conventional truth). Out of these two, this paper aims to focus on Vacī sacca (verbal truth) which is included in "Sammuti Sacca" by taking out extracts mainly from Pāli literature presenting fully how the truth is applied in practice, how it is of benefit to the people in return and how it is prestigious and powerful enough to benefit the people in that way.

Key words: Sacca, Ultimate Truth, Conventional Truth, Verbal Truth.

Introduction

Human beings do not usually live alone. They are social animals for their life. They need their own family, friends and society. Human beings have to communicate with one another. So, they have to speak. Speech is one of the means to communication between man and man and which is obviously the most useful tool in man's daily life. By using this tool effectively, man tries to meet his needs.

Ideally, speech used by man as one of his means for communication should be truthful by nature, for the truthful speech (*Vacīsacca*) constitutes the good speech (*Subhàsitavàcà*), which again leads to one of the blessings of life or the blessed speech in simple words. The auspicious speech, in turn, is the main cause of man and his world's prosperity. In the other way round, a false speech must be a lie and, very evidently, it will cause the opposite results of the truthful speech. Verily, truth is an essential ingredient in speech, by which man communicates with his society.

The Role of Sacca in the Four Ways of Conquering Others

Sacca is also found to be one of the four ways of conquering other people, namely,

1. Akkodha: patience

2. **Sàdhu:** no swearing or calling names

3. Dàna: charity and

4. *Sacca*: truth in speech.

These ways of conquering other people were pointed out by the **Buddha** to **Uttarà**, a devout young lady. The story goes that the **Buddha** asked her how she looked upon **Sīrimà** who, out of jealousy, poured hot oil and butter on her. **Uttarà** answered, 'Lord **Buddha**, I never felt

angry with her. Instead, I just radiated *mettà* or loving-kindness on her, recounting her thanks

which were not smaller than the Universe or the *Brahma* World because without her I wouldn't have had a chance to make donations or to listen to sermons.' Then the *Buddha* praised *Uttarà* by saying, 'Well-done, *Uttarà*, Well-done! People with anger should be conquered like this. True anger should be conquered by non-anger, rudeness by non-rudeness, miserliness by generosity and false speech by truth. As advised by the *Buddha*, these four ways of conquering other people should be followed by those who want to conquer others. By doing so, they are sure to gain the benefit of success.

The Role of Sacca in Ten Perfections (Pàramī)

Perfections (*Pàramī*) are fulfilled by the virtuous such as the *Bodhisattas*². They are ten as follows:

- 1. Dàna: perfection in charity or giving,
- 2. Sīla: perfection in moral virtues,
- 3. Nekkhamma: perfection in renunciation,
- 4. *Paññà*: perfection in wisdom,
- 5. Vīriya: perfection in effort,
- 6. Khantī. perfection in tolerance or fortitude,
- 7. Saccā: perfection in truthfulness,
- 8. Aditthàna: perfection in resolution,
- 9. Mettà: perfection in loving-kindness and
- 10. *Upekkhà*: perfection in equanimity.

Obviously, no one can hope to be virtuous without fulfilling the perfection in truthfulness, so *Sacca* (truthfulness) plays a vital role in the life of a virtuous individual.³

The Role of Sacca in the Noble Eightfold Path

The *Buddha* saw the different dispositions of beings and, consequently, He was unrivalled in teaching them. He set an ideal in oratory. He chose words suitable to the context of His sermons. His expertise in diction can be seen in the *Sundarika* Discourse of the *Sagàthàvagga*, *Samyuttanikàya*, in which He expounded the Noble Eightfold Path in such terms as *Sacca*, *Dhamma*, *Samyama* and so on in place of *Sammàvàcà*, *Sammàkammanta* and so on. Here *Sacca* (truthfulness) refers to *vacīsicca* (truth in speech) which in turns refers to *Sammàvàcà* (right speech), which is one of the constituents of the Noble Eightfold Path. Similarly, *Dhamma* here is not an umbrella term, as usually employed in scriptures, but a term that encompasses *Sammàdiṭṭhi* (right outlook or right view), *Sammasaīkappa* (right thinking), *Sammàsati* (right mindfuleness) and *Sammàsamàdhi* (right concentration). Again, *Sam vama* refers to *Sammàkammanta* (right action) and *Sammààjiva* (right live hood)⁴.

¹. Dhp.46.Dhp.A.1.202.Vv. A.62.

².Cp.A.269.

³. Cp. A.270.

⁴.S.1.171. S.A.1.218.

Thus, the Noble Eightfold Path is explained in the model of *Sacca-dhamma-samyama*. According to this discourse, *Sacca* is obviously a constituent of the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering.

The Role of Sacca in the Seven Moral Codes for being the king of Devas

Sacca is also described as one of the seven moral codes to observe for becoming an *Indra* the king of *Devas*. According to *Vatapada Sutta*¹ and *Mahàli Sutta*² in the *Sagàthàvagga Samyutta-nikàya*, the *Indra* attained his Indrahood by following the seven moral codes, which are:

- 1. Yàvajīvam màtàpettibharo assam: looking after parents for the whole life,
- 2. *Yàvajīvam kulejetthàpacàyī assam*: respecting the elders in the relatives for the whole life.
- 3. Yàvajīvam samhavāco assam: speaking softly for the whole life,
- 4. Yàvajīvam apisunavāco assam: not slandering for the whole life,
- 5. Yàvajīvam vigatamalamaccherena cetasà agàram ajjhàvaseyam: giving things away to charity without any attachment for the whole life,
- 6. Yàvajīvam saccavàco assam: speaking truthfully for the whole life and
- 7. Yàvajīvam akkodhano assam: not getting angry for the whole life.

Considering all these things, an aspirant for Indrahood cannot ignore 'Sacca' in his moral codes: 'Sacca' is essential for him to become an Indra, the celestial king of Devas.

The Role of Sacca in the Discourse for Protection

The discourse for protection, currently popular in our country, are eleven in number, the eighth of which bears the title of *Ătànàtiya Sutta*, named after the discourse by that name from the *Pàthikavagga* in the *Dīghanikāya*. Some verses in this discourse for protection tell of the attributes of the *Buddhas*. Among these verses are wishing one for protection of health and wealth. Look at the following verse as an example:

Tesam saccena sīlena, khantī mettà balena ca, tepi amhe nurakkhantu, arogena sukhena ca.⁴

It means that by the powers of (the *Buddhas Vipassī*, *Sikhī*, etc.) truth, moral virtues, patience, loving-kindness, and might, they may protect us to be healthy and wealthy. *Sacca* is among the four powers that would protect us to be healthy and wealthy.

The Role of Sacca in Thirty-eight Blessings

There are five tumultuous proclamations ('rumours', in loose translation). They are:

¹ .S.1.230.

².Ibid.232-3.

^{3.}D.3.158.

⁴.Parit . 31.

³. Sn. A. 2.3.

- 1. *Kappakolàhala*: the proclamation of the doomsday of the world (a hundred millennia before the event),
- 2. *Cakkavattikolàhala*: the proclamation of the birth of the universal monarch (a century),
- 3. **Buddhakolàhala**: the proclamation of the birth of the **Buddha** (a millennium before the event),
- 4. *Maňgalakolàhala*: the proclamation of the revelation of the *Maňgala* Discourse (a dozen years before the event). The *Maňgala* Discourse expounds the thirty-eight blessings and
- 5. *Moneyyakolàhala*: the proclamation of the *Moneyya* practice (seven years before the event¹).

Among them, the proclamation of the revelation, by the *Buddha* to the world of *Devas* and human beings of the thirty-eight blessings, was made by the *Suddhàvàsa Brahmas* twelve years before the event. Thus, as implored by one *Deva* from the *Tàvatimsà* Abode, the *Buddha* expounded the blessings, one of which was *Ariyasaccànadassanam*, the realization of the noble truths.

Conclusion

Thus, *Sacca*, truth, contributes not only to the good of mundane affairs but also to supra-mundane affairs. So the *Sacca*, truth is found to be essential for the worldly prosperity, victory, the factors of ten perfections, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Dhamma to become the king of devas and protections so on. Therefore, for those who not only want worldly prosperity but also aspire to the supra-mundane Dhamma should adhere to *Sacca*, truth. For these reasons, it should be borne in mind that *Sacca*, truth, is an important Dhamma.

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