

# Appraisal of Swabhavparamvada in the light of the Buddha's teaching

## Abstract

Ayurveda is an ancient science of life and based on different school of philosophies. The aim of Ayurveda to maintain the health of the healthy person and to cure the disease of the diseased person but the ultimate aim of Ayurveda to attain the emancipation that is free from rebirth. *Pali* literature is an ancient literature and ocean of knowledge. *Swabhavparamavada* is an important concept described in Ayurveda which is based on *Pali* literature. *Swabhava* means natural and *uparam* means destruction this concept is contributed by *charaka*. Lord Buddha explained the law of impermanence means nothing is permanent. Mind matter everything is changing and changing. Change is inherent in all phenomenal existence. There is nothing animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic that we can label as permanent, since even as we affix that label on something it is undergoing metamorphosis. Realizing this central fact of life by direct experience within him the Buddha declared "whether a fully enlightened one has arisen in the world or not it still remains a firm condition an immutable fact and fixed law that all formations are impermanent, subject to suffering and devoid of substance". *Anicca* (Impermanence) *Dukkha* (Suffering) and *anatta* (Insubstantiality) are the three characteristics common to all sentient existence.

**Keywords:** ayurveda, *pali* literature (language of buddha's teaching), *swabhavparamavada*, *swabhava*, *uparam*, *charaka*, *anicca* (impermanence) *dukkha* (suffering) and *anatta* (insubstantiality)

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**Abbreviations:** DN, digha nikaya; DH, dhammapada

## Introduction

Ayurveda is an ancient Science based on different school of philosophies. As it is an applied science so it has the scientific background. *Pali* literature is an ancient literature and ocean of knowledge. *Swabhavparamavada* is an important concept described in Ayurveda which is based on *Pali* literature. *Swabhava* means natural and *uparam* means destruction this concept is contributed by *charaka*. The *Dhatus* of the body get into disequilibrium due to imbalance of the cause and they enjoy equilibrium when the cause is in balance. Their *Dhatus* termination is always natural.<sup>1</sup>

*Acharya* depicts that there is cause in *Samya* or *Vaishamy* of *Dhatus* but there is no cause in their destruction and this is known as *Swabhavparam*. *Acharya Chakrapani* comments that, 'Karana nirapekshat uparamo vinasha' is *Swabhavparam* or destruction of any *dhatu* does not require any cause. *Acharya Gangadhar* explains 'Swabhavparam as "svasya dharmasya roopasya choparamo" or destruction of any objects own nature. Qualities or form is known as *Swabhavparam*. *Acharya Chakrapani* compared it with *Kshanbhangurvada*. It considers that the substance is created in the first movement sustain for next moment and then get destructed in third moment. It arises from and ends up in *asat*. While *swabhavparamvada* considers that object arises from a specific cause but get destroyed naturally.

## Discussion

*Acharya chakrapani* made it clearer as we need oil, pot and wick to burn a lamp and it keeps burning on till the oil lasts. Then it automatically stops burning without any reason. Like this the *sama* or

*vishama dhatus* need cause to produce them and no cause found in their destruction. The base of this concept is *Bauddha darashan* philosophy hence in this study; we have taken the concept of *Kshanbhangurvada* of *Bauddha Darshana* to understand the law of impermanence. *Anitya* (nothing is permanent) we can realize in *vipassana* meditation technique. This law of impermanence *charaka* explained in *Sharira sthana* also. While meditating we see different sensations and its arising and passing away nature by direct perception and understand the law of nature. Sensation is the crucial comprehensive thing to understand this law of impermanence.

The Buddha, out of his personal experience, found that suffering arises because of the mental habit of craving. This in itself was not a new discovery, but what was unique to his teaching was that he found a practical way out of suffering. By exploring the depths of his mind, he realized that between external objects and the mental reflex of craving, is a missing link-vedana-the feeling of body sensations.

The Buddha called this wisdom *sampajanna*-the constant thorough understanding of impermanence. By *Vipassana* one learns to develop the continuity of this understanding. The practice results in a calm, balanced mind in the midst of all the ups and downs of life, and leads to liberation from attachment, craving and suffering. This path is a true art of living that enables one to live a wholesome, creative life. And due to its non-sectarian nature, people from all communities, religions, castes and countries are able to derive great benefit from its application.

This is mentioned in verses 277 of the *Dhammapada*.

"sabbe sankhara anicca"ti, yada paññaya passati.

atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiya.

All things are impermanent, was the doctrine preached by the Buddha. What is the moral of this doctrine of the Buddha? This is a much more important question. The moral of this doctrine of impermanence is simple. Do not be attached to anything. It is to cultivate detachment--detachment from property, from friends, etc.--that he said "All these are impermanent." *Aniccha* is equal to *Swabhavparamavada* it is based on Buddha's teaching. The last words of the Buddha just he breathed his last and passed away into *mahaparinibban* were, "Decay or *anicca* is inherent in all component things; work out your own salvation with diligence." This is the in fact the essence of all his teaching during his forty five years of his ministry. To believe that all compound things are impermanent is Dhamma. This doctrine of impermanence has three aspects.

1. There is the impermanence of composite things.
2. There is the impermanence of the individual being.
3. There is the impermanence of the self-nature of conditioned things.

The impermanence of composite things has been well explained by the great Buddhist philosopher *Asanga*. "All things," says *Asanga*, "are produced by the combination of causes and conditions, and have no independent noumenon of their own. When the combination is dissolved, their destruction ensues. "The body of a living being consists of the combination of four great elements--viz., earth, water, fire and air--and when this combination is resolved into the four component elements, dissolution ensues." This is what is called the impermanence of a composite entity." Impermanence of the living individual is best described by the formula: being is becoming.

In this sense a being of a past moment has lived, but does not live, nor will he live. The being of a future moment will live, but has not lived, nor does he live; the being of the present moment does live, but has not lived, and will not live. In short, a human being is always changing, always growing. He is not the same at two different moments of his life. The third phase of the doctrine of impermanence is somewhat difficult for a common man to follow. To realize that every living being will die sometime or other is a very easy matter to understand. But it is not quite so easy to understand how a human being can go on changing-- becoming--while he is alive.

"How is this possible?" The Buddha's answer was, "This is possible because all is impermanent." This later on gave rise to what is called *Sunnya Vad*. The Buddhist *Sunnya* does not mean nihilism out and out. It only means the perpetual changes occurring at every moment in the phenomenal world. Very few realize that it is on account of *Sunnya* that everything becomes possible; without it nothing in the world would be possible. It is on the impermanence of the nature of all things that the possibility of all other things depends. If things were not subject to continual change, but were permanent and unchangeable, the evolution of all of life from one kind to the other, and the development of living things, would come to a dead stop. If human beings [had not] died or changed, but had continued always in the same state, what would the result have been? The progress of the human race would have come to a dead halt.

Immense difficulty would have arisen if *Sunnya* is [=had been] regarded as being void or empty. But this is not so. *Sunnya* is like a point which has substance but neither breadth nor length. All things are impermanent, was the doctrine preached by the Buddha. What

is the moral of this doctrine of the Buddha? This is a much more important question. The moral of this doctrine of impermanence is simple. Do not be attached to anything. It is to cultivate detachment--detachment from property, from friends, etc.--that he said "All these are impermanent."

*Anicca* (Impermanence). There is no solidity to existence; existence is always in a state of transformation. Everything is always on its way to becoming something else. This is as true for our world as for the client's. We often get caught up in psychological constructs which reify clients rather than seeing them as changing, fluid beings: To the extent that we assume a static and unchanging world we become blind to the possibilities for change within each moment.

We can also cling rigidly to an idea of what it means to be a therapist. Our own changing, flexible, protean self can become encrusted within a rigid conception of our role; our ability to flow and adapt can be obscured by a social role or personal character armor. We can lose our ability to see the genuine therapeutic possibilities of this moment right here, right now, which may just call for something original, daring, and never-before-thought-of. In a world that is constant transformation, the possibilities inherent in this moment may never come again. In understanding *anicca* we understand that we are subject to causes and conditions just like all other beings. One moment we're attentive, the next moment lost. One moment we're brilliant, the next moment befuddled. One moment we're compassionate, the next moment threatened and self-centered. We must be at home with all of this, as attentive as possible to our shifting mental states, accepting of change, and ever ready to seek a new state of balance. In addition, we must be willing to allow the role of client to change as the client's needs shift due to either growth or deterioration.<sup>5</sup>

The direct perception of *anicca* leads automatically to grasp of *anatta* and also of *Dukkha* and whosoever realizes these facts naturally turns to the path that leads out of suffering. Given the crucial importance of *anicca*, it is not surprising that the Buddha repeatedly stressed its significance for the seekers of liberation. In the *Maha-satipathan sutta* (the principal text in which he explained the technique of *vipassana*) he described the stages in the practice, which must in every case lead to the following experience. The meditator dwells observing the phenomenon of arising dwells observing the phenomenon of passing away...dwells observing the phenomenon of arising and passing away.

Dr. Alvarez, who spent almost his entire career at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory at the University of California, received the Nobel Prize for physics in 1968 for taking the lead in developing the liquid hydrogen "bubble chamber" and using it to identify subatomic particles such as quarks and leptons. Previously scientists widely believed widely held that the fundamental components of atoms were protons, neutrons and electrons. Dr. Alvarez and his colleagues developed a powerful new way of detecting and studying the still more fundamental particles of which protons, neutrons and electrons are made.

## Conclusion

*Jara* (Old), *mrityu* (Death) are *swabhavik vyadhi* (natural) and these cannot be stopped. Tear and wear is the law of nature. This means the *dhatu* of the body are destructed naturally and this cannot be stopped by any process indicating *swabhavparamvada*. This concept

we understand experientially with the help of *Vipassana* meditation which is great spiritual knowledge. *Acharya Sushruta* considered *dantapataadi* as *swabhavic* disease supporting *swabhavaparamvada*. In *vipassana* Meditation we observe different sensation it's arising and passing away nature and understand law of nature with perfect equanimity of mind.

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## Conflict of interest

Author declares there is no conflict of interest towards the manuscript.