

Does Jainism Reject Mental-Actions? - A Comparative Study of the *Uttarajjhaya-sûya* and the *Upâli-sutta* of the MN

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Introduction

Buddhism and Jainism come up in ancient India are known to be cardinal Sramanic traditions, which brought out teachings dissented to Brahmanism or Creationism contemporary existed and introduced atheistic doctrines that led to emancipation through the self-understanding. Undoubtedly, a number of identical teachings are perceptible in these two traditions. In a careful study, only point comes across, which made the difference between these two traditions, is the concept “*anatta*” which unique to Buddhism. In brief, the number of former leaders, the rules of the Order, characters of the leaders, the explanations of “*anicca*” and “*dukkha*” are almost equal to the both these two traditions. (I have already published a few writings in this regard. Please refer the following information)² This paper, particularly examines the similarities and dissimilarities between these two traditions referring the concept of “*Kamma*” found in the *Upali-sutta* of the MN³. The discussion took place between the Buddha and Dîghatapassi, who was one of the students of the Mahâvîra. Especially, this dialogue brings to light what the difference between the teachings of the Mahâvîra and the Buddha are prevailing.

As Dîghatapassi stated, Mahâvîra introduced the term “*danda*” for the “*kamma*” discussed in the Buddhist teaching.⁴ However, numerically the “*danda-s*” was equal to the Buddhist “*karma*”; three. Namely, they are called bodily (*kâya*), verbally (*vacî*) and mentally (*mano*) dandâ-s and kammâ-s. Nevertheless, Nâtaputta gives the precedence to the body (*kâya*) danda while Buddhism believes that the mind is pivotal among three kammâs. In this circumstance, the question remains to be answered is whether Mahâvîra or Jainism⁵ rejects the mental-actions, and Buddhism rejects the bodily-actions. It should be carefully examined if, this viewpoint of the “*danda*” was a traditional Jain teaching or merely a teaching introduced by Mahâvîra. In this study, my special attention will be paid towards the *Upâli-sutta* and the *Uttarajjhaya-sûya* and meantime additional references will also be discussed.

The discussion between Dîghatapassi and the Buddha

At the beginning, it would be imperative reading well what the *Upâli-sutta* originally says. [Followings are the quoted two paragraphs from translation of the *Majjhima -nikâya* by Bhikkhu Bodhi]⁶.

(1.) “Tapassi, how many kinds of action does the Nigantha Nataputta describe for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action?” “Friend Gotama, the Nigantha Nataputta is not accustomed to use the description ‘action, action’; the Nigantha Nataputta is accustomed to use the

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description ‘rod, rod.’” “Then, Tapassi, how many kinds of rod does the Nigantha Nataputta describe for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action?” “Friend Gotama, the Nigantha Nataputta describes three kinds of rod⁷ for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action; that is, the bodily rod, the verbal rod, and the mental rod.” “How then, Tapassi, is the bodily rod one, the verbal rod another, and the mental rod still another?” “The bodily rod is one, friend Gotama, the verbal rod is another, and the mental rod is still another.” “Of these three kinds of rod, Tapassi, thus analyzed and distinguished, which kind of rod does the Nigantha Nataputta describe as the most reprehensible for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action: the bodily rod or the verbal rod or the mental rod?” “Of these three kinds of rods, friend Gotama, thus analyzed and distinguished, Nigantha Nataputta describes the bodily rod as the most reprehensible for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, and not so much the verbal rod and the mental rod.” “Do you say the bodily rod, Tapassi?” “I say the bodily rod, friend Gotama.” “Do you say the bodily rod, Tapassi?” “I say the bodily rod, friend Gotama.” “Do you say the bodily rod, Tapassi?” “I say the bodily rod, friend Gotama.” Thus the Blessed One made the Nigantha Digha Tapassi maintain his statement up to the third time.

(2.) Then the Nigantha Digha Tapassi asked the Blessed One: “And you, friend Gotama, and how many kinds of rods do you describe for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action?” “Tapassi, the Tathagata is not accustomed to use the description ‘rod, rod’; the Tathagata is accustomed to use the description ‘action, action.’ “But, friend Gotama, how many kinds of actions do you describe for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action?” “Tapassi, I describe three kinds of actions for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action: that is, bodily action, verbal action, and mental action.” “How then, friend Gotama, is bodily action one, verbal action another, and mental action still another?” “Bodily action is one, Tapassi, verbal action is another, and mental action is still another.” “Of these three kinds of actions, friend Gotama, thus analysed and distinguished, which kind of action do you describe as the most reprehensible for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action: bodily action or verbal action or mental action?” “Of these three kinds of action, Tapassi, thus analysed and distinguished, I describe mental action as the most reprehensible for the performance of evil action, for the perpetration of evil action, and not so much bodily action and verbal action.” “Do you say mental action, friend Gotama?” “I say mental action, Tapassi.” “Do you say mental action, friend Gotama?” “I say mental action, Tapassi.” “Do you say mental action, friend Gotama?” “I say mental action, Tapassi.”⁸

The above two paragraphs incorporate a few crucial spheres where our prudent analysis required. As I have examined, they are;

1. Two traditions use different terms ‘kamma’ and ‘danda’ for the immoral actions.
2. The both traditions numerically admit three actions (3)
3. Two traditions agreed that the three actions are functioning on an individual basis.
4. While Buddhism admits the mental-action to be the most culpable, Mahāvīra taught that the bodily-action is the most reprehensible

Consonant with the above facts, two contrasting points are found between these two traditions. As I noted in the footnote in advance, “danda” could not be rendered as “rod” at all in this context of immorality. Jacobi translates it as ‘committing by sin’.⁹ Monier Williams defines alternatively to be power of application and violence.¹⁰ Accordingly, I understand “danda” as “violence” since it should be explained with two subsequent words; evil actions and the existence of evil.¹¹ The above analysis leads to raise a few possible sub-questions in relation to the research plan as (1) does Buddhism reject the bodily-actions? (2) does Jainism reject the mental-actions? (3) to what extent Buddhism affords priority to the mind in the context of the *Upâli-sutta*?

Buddhist teachings on the bodily-actions

Buddhism, introducing causality, affirms that the body and mind are interdependent. Explicitly, the *Nalakalâpaka-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikâya* insists that the existence of an individual mind and body is impossible.¹² Then, in which sense the Buddha said that the mental-actions are primordial? The dependable answer could be found at the end of the discussion in this writing. However, the verses found in the *Dhammapada* claim the similar viewpoint regarding what we are discussing. In this connection, the *Dhammapada* points out the advantage of restraining the bodily, verbally and mentally doors.¹³ It, further, claims that a monk, who restrains all three doors, is called as the Brâhmana. Under this circumstance, the teachings in the *Upâli-sutta* presents a critical teachings how the mind becomes more important in the context of immorality. Yet, a certain sutta of the *Samyutta-nikâya*, also asserts that the mind is leading the world.¹⁴ In this regard, a similar teaching could further be found even in the first verse of the *Dhammapada*.¹⁵ However, it does not mean that the Buddhism rejects the body/matter or bodily-actions at all. Obviously, the teaching in the *Upâli-sutta* should be understood in the moral sense. Morally, the bodily and verbal actions are functioning as a stimulation of the mind. In consequence, the mind corruption could be the most grievous than the bodily and verbal-actions. For instance, the wrong views, an outcome of the mental-actions, could lead for the whole bodily and verbal actions.

The connection between the volitions and the precedence of the actions

If the mind and body are interdependent, in which sense does Buddhism convince that the precedence should be given to the mind? In this regard, the *Nibbedhika-pariyâya-suttas*; the only reference that clearly states that the volitions (*cetanâ*) are leading the Kammâ-s.¹⁶ However, the *Upâli* also contains the same standing point in an indirect form where the discussion is continued with *Upâli*.¹⁷ The point that clearly should be understood herein is that the *Upâli-sutta* does not occur that the mind is leading to the Kamma-s, but, the volitions are leading all three kinds of the Kammas; kâya, citta and mano. Broadly speaking, the mental actions (mano-kamma) mean the functioning state of the mind (mano). In other words, mano and mano-kamma-s are two different concepts since the mental actions vary from the original form of the mind. The *Upâli-sutta* stresses on the mental-actions unless the mind.¹⁸ And, it further compares the gravity of the Kamma-s among the three. In understanding the real context of the *Upâli-sutta*, it is needed to observe what the mano-kammas are. A notable aspect in this regard is that among the six senses, the mind comes in the sixth and it objects the Dhamma-s and depends on the mind-consciousness.¹⁹ Basically, the kammas by the mind could be taken to be the

Dhamma-s. Peculiarly, a synonym for the Dhamma-, so in this context, it would be taken as the volitions.²⁰ In this respect, the teaching of the *Nibbedhika-pariyâya-sutta* also adaptable to understand the content of the *Upâli-sutta* because the term *cetanâ* is a synonym for the Dhamma-s. Though the commentary of the *Dhammapada* is contrary to my current understanding, I do strongly believe that the term Dhamma comes in the first verse of the *Dhammapada* could be rendered to be volitions.²¹ However, the phrase “*cetanâham bhikkhave kammam vadâmi*”²² is usually misinterpreted and the kamma is distinguished as thoughts. How I understand this, is that the Buddha made such statement comparing other two kamma-s and emphasized that the *cetanâ* or the *mano-kamma* is the culpable Kamma. Hence, the statement “*cetanâham bhikkhave kammam vadâmi*” should not be understood out of the comparative context. The other interesting question is how the *mano-kamma*-s or the *cetanâ* becomes chief among these three. Especially, the volitions or the Dhamma-s are leading to uphold a wrong view, which is considered to be the most serious sinful kamma. According to the *Anguttara-nikâya*, the Buddha clearly says that the wrong view is the only severer dhamma (volitions?).²³ Hence, the teaching of the *Upâli-sutta* should can be understood that the *mano-kamma*-s were defined to be the most gravity because it leads to the wrong views, the most sinful dhamma-s.

How does the *Sûtrakrtângas* respond to the Buddhist teachings?

However the viewers who believed that the thoughts are leading the kamma-s (the Buddhists), are seriously criticized in the *Sûtrakrtângasûya*.²⁴ Nevertheless, the weakness of the *Sûtrakrtângas* is that it does not make any rational argument against the Buddhist doctrine unless brought out baseless critiques.²⁵ My understanding is that the *Sûtrakrtângasûya* could be considered as a later work than the *Uttarajjhaya* and in consequence, it has made opposed criticisms against the Buddhist teaching. Another interesting fact the above source demonstrated is presenting arguments made by later Buddhist schools.²⁶ Therefore, our presumption that the source could be later is undoubtedly confirmed and a broad discussion is not required related to the doctrine in the *Sûtrakrtângas*.

Clues in the *Uttarajjhaya*

For the facts come to light in the *Uttarajjhaya*, a view can be supported that Jainism also primarily tended to the mind among the three doors. As the text says that the ignorance of the Dhamma is interpreted as the cause of the Kamma (previous). In accordance with the above point, the point I pick out is that the Kamma is due to the bodily violence (*kâya-danda*) could be altered. The *Uttarajjhaya* furthermore attests stating that the sleeping place is upper or lower for a monk, who practices penance and steady mind, will not be affected. Nevertheless, whose mind is not steady, indeed, he will be affected. The above remark also affirms that Jainism has focused on the steady mind since their *Kammâs* were caused by the mind. In addition to these, a metaphor comes in the 23rd chapter of the *Uttarâdhyayana*, is clear evidence that Jains accommodate the mind in the first place. According to the discussion between Kesi and Gautama, the mind is defined to be a stubborn horse and Gautama claims that controlling the horse, the journey could be finished in the right path.²⁷

As discussed the above, the *Upâli-sutta* reveals that Jainism admits three type of violence and the similar fact can be found in the 24th chapter of the *Uttarâdhyayana*, where explains the *samitis* thus;

“A zealous monk should prevent his mind from desires for the misfortune of somebody else , from thoughts on acts which cause misery to living beings , and from thoughts on acts which cause their destruction .”

“A zealous monk should prevent his speech from (expressing) desires, &c. (as in verse”

“In standing, sitting, lying down, jumping, going, and in the use of his organs, a zealous monk should prevent his body from intimating obnoxious desires”²⁸

The above three quotations prove that the Jain teachings also run parallel to Buddhism. Especially, the above three statements are similar to the contents of the verses of the *Dhammapada*.²⁹

However, the same text claims thus;

“By watchfulness of the mind he concentrates his thoughts; thereby he truly practises control.

By watchfulness of speech he keeps free from prevarication; thereby he enables his mind to act properly.

By watchfulness of the body he obtains *Samvara* 1; thereby he prevents sinful *Âsra*vas. “³⁰

As to how the above verses have recorded, Jain agrees that the mind comes in the first place, but the way of practice is based on the restrain of the body that will lead to the *Nibbâna*. The 23rd chapter further attests that the mind leads to awake the *ñâna*.³¹ According to the discussion made herein, it can be said that Jainism clearly admitted the mind to be primordial in violence. Nonetheless, in practice, the body is given the priority since they believed that the bodily restrain lead to the purity of the mind. The above argument also asserts that they restrained their body to purify the mind.

Conclusion

After analyzing the facts discussed in the body of the paper, a few concluding remarks could be held out. Mainly, it can be stated that the *Upali-sutta* discusses on the mental-actions unless the mind. Consequently, understanding the mental kamma-s would be the point, which helps to untangle the knot why the mental-actions are taken the first place. The paper concludes that the reason could be, its leading to the wrong views. And, answering to the question how to justify the Buddhist view, it can be said that the Buddha might have metaphorically convinced “the Dhamma is superior to the Vinaya”. While the *mano-kammas* leading to the practice of the Dhamma, rest of two *kammas* direct to the Vinaya. The above point was concluded by referring to the commentary of the DN, which notes that the Vinaya means the training of the body and speech.³² The commentary does not occur any connection to the mind in the above context. Thus, it can be concluded that the Jains mainly followed Vinaya and the Buddha gave the priority to the Dhamma. Even the explanation of the *Sûtrakrtânga* and the commentary by *Sîlânka* proves that the Jains extremely inclined to the Vinaya.³³ However, references drawn from the *Uttarajjhaya* attest that the early Jain teachings did not give priority to the body like how the *Nâtaputta* or the *Sûtrakrtângastated*. *Uttarajjhaya* contains ancient teachings of Jains and its view on the kamma is most agreeable to the Buddhist view.

References

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- ² The 56th sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya
- ³“Na kho, āvuso gotama, ācinnam niganthassa nāmaputtassa ‘kammam, kamma’nti paññāpetum; ‘danam, danda’nti kho, āvuso gotama, ācinnam niganthassā nāmaputtassa paññāpetu”nti. M I 371
- ⁴ It should be noted in advance that the teachings presented by Mahāvīra were not always fully agreed to the original Jain teachings. As we have noticed, the Jain canonical texts are fertile even with the former leaders’ teachings. For instance, the Uttarajjhaya brings a discussion between Gautama, who was one of students of Mahāvīra and Kesi, a follower of Pārúvanātha.). See the 23rd chap. of the Uttarajjhaya.
- ⁶ I have made my own suggestions as the translation does not fit for me.
- ⁷ I do not think that the term ‘rod’ is suitable in this context. Though “Danda” generally can be translated into rod, in this context it offers the meaning “violence” because “Danda” here comes in a negative sense related to ‘immorality’.
- ⁸ Bhikkhus Nyanamoli and Bodhi, Majjhima-nikāya, trans. 478-479
- ⁹ Jacobi, H. 244
- ¹⁰ SED 467
- ¹¹“Tini kho, āvuso gotama, nigantho nāmaputto danāni paññāpeti pāpassa kamma kiriyāya pāpassa kamma pavatīyāti, seyyathidam – kāyadanam, vācīdanam, manodanda”nti. M I 371
- ¹² Seyyathāpi, āvuso, dve nalakalāpiyo aññamaññam nissāya timmheyyum. Evameva kho, āvuso, nāmarūpapaccayā viññānam; viññānapaccayā nāmarūpañ; S II 114
- ¹³ Kāyena samvaro sādhu, sādhu vācāya samvaro Manasā samvaro sādhu, sādhu sabbattha samvaro Sabbattha samvuto bhikkhu, sabbadūkkhā pamuccati. Dhp 361
- ¹⁴“Cittena nīyati loko, cittena parikkassati Cittassa ekadhammassa, sabbeva vasamanvagū”ti S I 39
- ¹⁵ ManopubbaĒgamā dhammā, manosemmhā manomayā Manasā ce padumhena, bhāsati vā karoti vā Tato nam dukkhamanveti, cakkamva vahato padam. Dhp 1
- ¹⁶ Cetanāham, bhikkhave, kammam vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammam karoti – kāyena vācāya manasā A III 415
- ¹⁷“Cetanam pana, gahapati, nigantho nāmaputto kismim paññāpeti”ti? “Manodadasmim, bhante”ti. M I 376
- ¹⁸“Manokammanti, tapassi, vadāmi” M I 373/ “Cetanam pana, gahapati, nigantho nāmaputto kismim paññāpeti”ti? “Manodadasmim, bhante”ti M I 377/ so samaGo vā brāhmano vā iddhiṃ cetovasippatto ekena manopadosena bhasmam kātum. ibid
- ¹⁹ manasā dhammam viññāya M III 216
- ²⁰ Cetanāti tīsu dvāresu nibbattitacetanāva gahitā. A-a V 69
- ²¹ Dhammāti gunadesanāpariyattinissattanijjīvasena cattāro dhammā nāma Dhp-a 1 21
- ²² A III 415
- ²³ Nāham, bhikkhave, aññam ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yena anuppannā vā akusalā dhammā uppajjanti, uppannā vā akusalā dhammā bhīyyobhāvāya vepullāya samvattanti yāthayidam, bhikkhave, micchādimmhi. A I 30
- ²⁴ Sūtrakritānga; 2-24-28
- ²⁵ Sūtrakritānga; 2:29i
- ²⁶ Sūtrakritānga; 1: 15-17
- ²⁷ Uttar. 23;55-58
- ²⁸ Jacobi, H. Uttaradhyayana trans. 136
- ²⁹ Dhp 361
- ³⁰ Jacobi, H. Uttaradhyayana trans. 170
- ³¹ Uttar; 29: 57
- ³² Kāyikavācasikaajjhācāranisedhanato cesa kāyam vācāñca vineti, tasmā vividhanayattā visesanayattā kāyavācānam vinayanato ceva vinayoti akkhāto D-a I 17
- ³³ Sūtrakritānga & Commentary; samāya-uddesa 24-28