

THE IDEA OF ORIGINATION OF INSTITUTION OF A STATE IN THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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The religion of Lord Buddha is concerned with the human, its life and behavior. Therefore the Buddha's education is primarily concerned with human welfare and emancipation.¹ The doctrines of Buddhism are well known as the doctrines of human beings, by human beings, and for human beings. It is therefore the doctrines of Buddhism that have performed a unique function in shaping the theoretical, social and religious modes of life. Thus it is not interpreted only on religious perspective but also among others which include economic, social-political perspectives too. In Indian history, the sixth century was marked as the century of changes in the socio-religious arena. These variations also touch the political characteristic. At that time the institution of state was termed as an absolute necessity for an orderly society which is also reflected in the early literature such as *Arthasâstra*, *Dharmasâstra* and the *Nitisâstra* which reflects the system of ancient Vedic political thought and institutions. Buddhism and Jainism which were the dominant philosophies during the time of the sixth century, their written records have also mentioned the background and reasons of origin of the institution of the state, its government, and the concept of kingship and their functions and administrative structure in detailed. The philosophies of Jainism and Buddhism in their written records focused on the necessity and urgency of the political system which included the social order, position of the ruler and its functions towards the society.

The various perspective of the origin of states

There are many theories and perspectives available related to the origin of state. Of them social contract theories, divine theory is the most important theories concerned with the origin of state. Social thinkers like Aristotle, Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Hobbs, John Stewart Mill, Thomas Hill Green, L.T Hobhouse, Harold J. Laski and Robert M. MacIver, Karl Marx, Lenin, Engels and many more have provided with their own perspectives on theories pertaining to the origin of state, historical background behind origin of state, functions of state and so on. Buddhism too has its own perspective regarding the origin of state and kinship. But it is justified to say that Buddha's thoughts on state origin are based on social contract or divine theory. If the Buddhist idea of origin of state is compared with the the divine theory of origin of state, a Buddhist ideology seems contrary with the divine theory of origin of state as Buddhism never believed that everything in the world is the creation of God. The Buddha never authenticates this that God has played a significant role in human life. The Buddha was of the view that humans have solved their problems by using their intellectual power and creation or origin state is one of them.

In the terminology of political science, various political idea has been acknowledged as the thought about the state, its nature, purpose, functions and structure. In this connection, various perspectives are linked with the origin of the state. Important perspective connected with the state are:

1. *Organic theory of the state*
2. *Liberal Individualistic perspective.*
3. *Welfare state perspective.*
4. *Class perspective.*

Organic theory of the state: The organic theory of state made comparison of state with the body of living things and the organs of the body with various units of the state.² The organic perspective of the state termed the state as a living and natural institution which develops with the development and proper functioning of its various subunits. According to this theory of the state, man cannot imagine its existence without the state. It is only the state that made a man civilized. Aristotle the important advocator of the organic theory of state termed that “Man by nature is a political animal”.³

Liberal Individual perspective: Liberal Individualist perspective reflect the mechanist view of the state which held that state and government is the result of the natural assent of men, created for a definite purpose to serve the people.⁴ This perspective described the state as artificial creation by man for mutual benefit. Thus the state is the result of the common will of the society. Social contract theory is an important theory associated with the Liberal Individualist Perspective. John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau are the main exponent of this perspective.⁵

Welfare state perspective: Welfare state perspective is the result of the transformation of liberal negative approach into Positive Liberalism. Positive liberalism promoted the concept of the welfare state.⁶ The welfare state held that the state came into existence for securing the welfare of its subjects. An important exponent of the positive liberal approach or welfare state is John Stewart Mill, Thomas Hill Green, L.T Hobhouse, Harold J. Laski and Robert M. MacIver.

Class perspective: The class perspective approach is based on Marxism Theory of state. According to Class, the perspective state is neither a natural or ethical institution nor an artificial creation. It held that the state came into existence because of class struggle between the capitalist class and working class or in other words due to the emergence of private property that divided the society into two division of classes that is one owning the mean of production (Capitalist) other being constrained to live on its slavery (Labour).⁷ Karl Marx, Lenin, Engels are the pioneers of the class perspective of the state.

Buddhist perspective of the origin of states:

The word ‘state’ is translated as ‘*Ratha*’ in the Pali which stands for a *reign, empire, country, or realm*.⁸ According to Buddhist written records, the state is not a single unit but a combination of many factors like sovereignty or independence, government, territory and people. The notion of the state during the Buddha’s time consisted of the above four mentioned elements. *Mahāvagga* and *Dhammapada* are the important texts of Buddhism which contains the details about the state and the territories at that time. The *Mahāvagga* provides details of ruler *Seniya Bimbisāra*, the king of Magadha state who held the sovereignty over eighty thousand townships⁹ while the commentaries of *Dhammapada* talked about the population, total area, *Rajagaha* as the capital of the *Magadha* state.¹⁰

Aggaññ Suttanta is the important text of Buddhism that provides information about the Buddha’s thoughts on development of state and Kinship. It states that the origin of kingship and state evolved and approved through certain stages of human society. It lights our knowledge about the growth of human beings (*sattii*), the cause of origin of personal property, the family, the need for socio-political and economy institutions in prehistoric society. In the *Aggaññ Suttanta*, the

Buddhist theory on state and its origin is discussed widely and systematically. The Buddha in the Aggaññ Suttanta held that in the prehistoric age the life of the people was extremely effortless and they with very less requirements. The text indicates that at that time people enjoyed peace, happiness and prosperity which lasted for many years. With the passage of time along with the growth and development in the social status, the humans started to settle down into small social units like families (*Agglirini*) and new institutions like society, marriage, culture, recreation, private property and so on came into existence. Hence the demand of shelter and food grains increased by the time which lead to the greediness, collecting, competition began to come in to play between human beings which gave rooms to the crime to take birth and lead to the imbalance of proper functioning of the society. The Aggaññ Suttanta described that the division of their rice plants or grain and the establishment of boundaries (*mariyâdam thapemsu*) in the fields were the main reason of greediness and important factor which lead to the creation of state. To find out the solution of problem all the human beings gathered and discussed ways to solve this problem. Finally they then decided to appoint an officer called (*sattli*) to solve this social problem. In this way a new the concept of power and authority came into existence. In this stage of development all the social problems were settled by the *Sattli*.

In the second stage of the development of society new position was created called *Khattiya* or Lord who listen all the disputes related to social order and land and in the third stage of the development of new position called Mahâsammata or *Râjâ* (*Dhammena ranjetiti riijii*) or the king since he pleased the subjects with Law and Justice. The position of *Râjâ* was of higher position in the society who was elected or nominated on the authorised of people who pleased and protects the people with his morality. Mahâsammata was depended on tax for his livelihood, which he received from the people.

The theory of formation of state in Buddha's perspective seems to be as social contract theory but the buddha's perspective did not discussed any kind of forcefully contract between the ruler and the subjects. There was a mutual agreement between the people regarding the establishment the office of the head of the state. The Buddha smartly made an attempt to give details the position and role of king in the society. The Buddha maintained that not only the office of the head of state was created but it was utmost important to maintain peace and order and protect the property of the subjects in return. In this way the concept of Kinship and state as per buddhist perspective originate .

Further the Buddha explained that state is a sovereign body and its superiority is uttered by a variety of Pali terms such as *ānā, ādhipacca, issariya, vasa and siri*. Where *Ānā* stands for the order or command and implies the ability to give orders to all. *Ādhipacca* stands for, the quality of imposing superiority over others. *Issariya* is the quality or capacity to impose sovereignty and finally, *Siri* is majesty and prosperity and is based on material possessions. The seven symbols of sovereignty are as *Cakkaratana, Hathiratna, Gahapatiratn, Parinayakaratn, Itthiratn, Maniratn, Assaratna*. Pointing the important elements of the state the Buddha held that following be the important constituents of ths state without which a state will not be called as a complete state.

Raja (The King)

Rattha (The Territory)

Amacca and *paarisajja* (Ministers and bureaucracy)

Balam (The Armed Forces)

Kosakotthagara (The Treasury)

Anuyutta khattiya and *kuddarajano* (Allies)

Manussa(ThePeople)

Lastly we can say that the Buddha was a practical man. He never advocated any political system. He believed in civilizing the systems of government which already in practice. He wanted the rulers to be moral in their conduct. Thus no fresh political system was advocated by the Buddha. Perhaps, the Buddha had paid more attention to the principles of the rule which the important factor and need to be adopted in the governance. The society at the time of Buddha was divided into various sects and castes or varnas. Thus to bring the equilibrium in the society the Buddha suggested that if the ruler understands the basic law of nature and the societies then they could lead their lives by reason and prepare themselves to face reality. By so doing, they will attain happiness both at the individual level and at the social level.

While preaching the doctrine on the notion of State the Buddha did not prefer any kind of political system.¹¹ But if logically studied and compiled the various doctrines of Buddha, one would find that Buddha's approaches are very much closest to the democracy which is the best political system adopted by maximum countries of the world in contemporary time. Buddhism and democracy are mutually independent. The religion of Buddha neither precludes nor entails liberal democracy and vice versa. The religion of Buddha is all about high-quality life for the human being and other beings and about the principles, practices, traits of character, states of mind and view of authenticity that lead to the freedom of the individual from suffering.

Even the third gem of Buddhism that is Sangha worked on the lines of democracy, which served as a model of sharing of resources, social equality and democratic process. The Buddhists elucidate their own model of the state in which the state merely becomes an instrument of the Dhamma, which now assumes the form of a celestial force capable not only of containing the challenge of the power of the state but also of regulating its behavior. In this wisdom, the state becomes a moral institution depicting its authority from the Dhamma and guided by its repository, the Samgha.

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