

The Concept of *Upādāna*: Its Development from the Vedic Period to the Buddhist Period from Ritualistic Perspective to Soteriological Goal

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Introduction

The ultimate purpose of this study is to investigate the development of the concept of *Upādāna* from the Vedic period to the Buddhist period. According to Indian philosophic and religious traditions, the term *Upādāna* plays different roles as a semantic term. The term *Upādāna* derives from the Sanskrit term and its root is up-ā-dā, which provides the meaning "to take up" or holding into or moving near to oneself. This concept illustrates an extraordinary meaning of how Indian religious thought gradually transforms ritualistic performance into the psychic thought and develops into metaphysical reality from the early Vedic period to the Upanishadic and classical Vedantic period. From these opinions, it is evident that these religious movements have analyzed the concept of *Upādāna* from different perspectives. Meanwhile, Buddhism also provides conceptual analysis on the function of *Upādāna* from psychological and soteriological perspectives. Especially, *Upādāna* in the Vedic period has primarily been known as the material cause or "substrate" for rituals and creation, linked closely to sacred elements used in worship (like flowers, sandalwood) and the idea of "cause" in cosmology, while in the Upanishadic period, the term *Upādāna* is known in view of betaking oneself to actions or things in accord once with desire. To confer diversity of thought, we will refer to what the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad conceptualizes on *Upādāna* in view of whatever one betakes himself to, so does he work (Yatkraturbhavati tatkarṃma kurute, Brh. IV. iv. 5). As this betaking to the thing depends upon desire, it is said that in order that there may be *Upādāna* there must be *tanhā*. In the Upanisads also we read "Whatever one desires so does he betake himself to" (sa yathakamo bhavati tatkraturbhavati), at this point *Upādāna* is known as one's desire. Thus, the availability of the term *Upādāna* from an early Indian religious point of view is clear. From the early Buddhist point of view, *Upādāna* has been categorized into four compartmentalized (*imāni cattāri upādānāni*): Sensual Grasping (*kāmuṇupādāna*), View Grasping (*diṭṭhupādāna*), Rites and Rituals Grasping (*sīlabbatupādāna*) and Self-Doctrine Grasping (*attavādupādāna*). According to Buddhism, these four types of *Upādāna*s are known as the psychological and soteriological hindrances. Therefore, the

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Buddhism emphasizes the practice of mindfulness of behavior as the means to overcome *Upādāna*. According to Buddhism, the eradication of *Upādāna*, or attachment, is essential in the pursuit of *Nibbāna*. By letting go of desires and clinging, one transcends suffering and achieves liberation. This detachment leads to the cessation of the cycle of rebirth, ultimately realizing the state of *Nibbāna*. In this manner, this study holds the view that the concept of *Upādāna* semantically, doctrinally, philosophically and soteriologically shift the broader historical context of the transition from Vedic ritualism to the Shramanic reform movements of the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, arguing that the transformation of *Upādāna* reflects a wider intellectual movement from external, ritual-centered religiosity toward internal, psychologically oriented soteriology.

Statement of Research Problem

The central research problem of this work is to investigate the absence of a clear, well-documented account of how *Upādāna* transitioned across three distinct contexts from Vedic, Upanishadic and Buddhist perspectives, from the ritualistic vocabulary, Vedic and Upanishadic metaphysical and Buddhist soteriological point of view where *Upādāna* becomes the ninth link, "clinging," in the twelve-linked chain of dependent origination (*pratityasamutpada*).

Literature Review

Upādāna in the Vedic period primarily meant the material cause or "substrate" for rituals and creation, linked closely to sacred elements used in worship the natural phenomena in cosmology. In fact, from the Vedic mindset illustrates *Upādāna* in terms of ritual actions and offerings, which signified the physical materials gathered for sacrificial elements in the universe. Through the offering of so-called sacrificial items, the soul of the departed person will experience the sacrificial items. In the Aitareya Upanishad at the beginning, it is declared that the soul along was in the beginning; this (Universe Nothing else was active.) Hence, this universe was not originally anything; it refers to the world, consisting of name and form, framed by the supreme spirit; he is the only spirit out of *Upādāna* desire. Moreover, Vishwanath Prasad Varma (1973) holds the opinion that *Upādāna* and karma would show that early Buddhism adhered to the organic view of the universe. The elimination of *Upādāna* is essential for the attainment of nirvana. In Buddhism, however, *Upādāna* shifts meaning to "clinging" or "attachment," especially linked with craving that leads to suffering, contrasting the Vedic sense and focusing on internal psychological processes rather than external worship. Moreover, De la Vallee Poussin (1913) in his *Salistambha Sutra* explains the word "*Upādāna*" as Trusnavaipulya (higher level of attachment), the higher activity of attachment or desire. From this

point, *Upādāna* seems to be an active process of mind. Thus, in connection with these opinions, it is evident that the concept of *Upādān* has a long history with reference to Indian religious tradition. However, Early Buddhism holds separate conceptual analysis without submission to the existing religious thought.

Research Gap

On top of the existing literature reveals a clear gap: while Vedantic scholarship has given much empathize on examining *Upādāna Kārana* as a metaphysical category while early Buddhist scholarship has extensively analyzed *Upādāna* within dependent origination, no substantial relations are traced through a continuous historical and etymological account beginning with the term's original Vedic ritual sense. But the concept of *Upādāna* has its own doctrinal identity within the early Buddhist framework.

Conclusion

The development of *Upādāna* from the Vedic to the Buddhist period traces a remarkable conceptual and soteriological journey from a ritualistic, metaphysical and cosmic causation, to an internal psychological state of clinging *Upādāna* responsible for suffering and rebirth. From an early Buddhist point of view, by understanding and overcoming *Upādāna*, one can attain liberation and true peace. Thus, this extended abstract has outlined with the textual evidence and identified a significant gap in scholarship on the concept of *Upādāna* from the Vedic period to the early Buddhist era.

Keywords: *Upādāna*, Vedic period, Upanishadic period, Buddhist period, Nibbāna

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