

BUDDHIST TEACHINGS TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

The prime objective of Buddhism is to bring about the well-being and happiness of the multitude of mankind as a whole (bahujana hitāya, bahujanasukhāya). For this purpose Buddha preached the doctrine which is morally good in outset (ādikalyāna), morally good in mid (majjhe kalyāna) and morally good in conclusion (pariyosāna kalyāna). While setting up the well-being and happiness of the mundane world ultimately Buddhism has focused to show the path of attaining higher peace or ultimate happiness (paramasukha). The realistic path of achieving higher peace based on one's development on morality (sīla) concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā). Sīla (morality) or good behavior is the foundation of Buddhist ethics. Therefore, sīla (morality) together with Samādhi (concentration) and paññā (Wisdom) bring forth internal peace which is directly related to the external peace. Once, a deity asked Buddha "conflicts inside, conflicts outside (antojāṭābahijaṭā), this generation is entangled in conflicts, I ask you this Gotama who can disentangle this conflicts. Buddha replied, "a man established on virtue (sīla) wise, developing the mind (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā) a Bhikku ardent and discreet, he can disentangle this conflict (S.I. 165). This statement of the Buddha obviously emphasizes that peace and happiness in this complicated world should be established by cultivating and developing aforesaid threefold training (tisikkhā).

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Thus, main themes of Buddhism are truth, freedom, justice, loving-kindness, compassion, love, happiness emancipation etc. The fundamental teachings, such as the four noble truth, causality, kamma and rebirth, three characteristics etc. were preached by the Buddha for achieving above themes. The achievement of the above goals depend on oneself, Buddha only shows the path. “*Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro tathāgatā*” (Dph. XX. 4). The path is practical and realistic, since, without practicing, one can never achieve peace and freedom only by mere praying or doing sacrifices or rituals. The themes, peace, freedom, liberation, love, happiness etc. are not unique for the Buddhism but they are common to many religions in the world. Many prophets, religious leaders and saints preached their doctrines for the well-being and happiness of all humankind. But doctrine of peace in Buddhism has unique features, which distinguishes it from other religions. One of such cardinal teachings of Buddhism is causality (*hētu-phala*). According to Buddhism all conflicts and problems arise conditionally. Not only conflicts and problems but also all other physical and psychical phenomena are dependently originated. The following formula emphasizes the conditionality of arising and cessation of conflicts as well as all other phenomena. “Whenever this is present this is present, whenever this is absent, this is also absent (*imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti*), from the arising of this, this arises from the cessation of this, this cease to be (*imassa uppādā idaṃ uppajjati, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati*). This doctrine or formulation is the central teaching of Buddhism and it was clearly explained in the first, sermon of the Buddha while he was explaining the four noble truth, In the discourse of four noble truth, Buddha evidently and plainly clarified the way of arising problems and conflicts while showing the path of cessation of all such conflicts. But here it is not expected to explain further about the first sermon of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

In this very special tutorial we hope to discuss the building of sustainable peace in Buddhism. The main reason is, Buddhism always aims to foster peace among all the living beings in the world, not only the human but also the animals. At birth of prince Siddhartha, there occurred thirty-two wonders having cold the

heinous hells, each and every opposition animals played lovely with each other, that was first peace building of Buddha. Once Buddha said to Ven. Ānanda that the Buddhist dispensation always depends on the blossom friendship. Buddha always stressed building friendship between people, since it directly cause for building a sustainable peace among the living beings. When Buddha goes on resorting the people other noisy religious parties always kept quite their followers since Buddha really liked the peace and silence. In *Paṭama sārāṇiya sutta* revealed mutual understanding always resolves every questionable opportunity. The first step of peace building in Buddhism is the first precept of, '*Pānātipātā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*' (I hereby undertake abstaining from killing living beings) it guides the people to be a loving person and to buildup kindness for each and every living beings whom are in every nook and cranny in the world. At present Buddhism is the mostly admirable peaceful religion in the world. When other religions like Islam, channel their followers for destroying other religions but Buddhism channel the Buddhists for respecting other religions. Buddha made his preaching among sixty two religions, But Buddha or any of Buddhists monk never insulted on any religious leader since everyone can follow any belief as they wish, the discussion between Buddha and Upāli the householder, Buddha said him to never stop giving alms to Jaina monks. When Shākya-koliya the two royal clans got ready for the war to divide water of Rohiṇi river, But Buddha stopped it having emphasizing the value of peace. Secondly, when king Vidhūḍabha went to destroy the shākya kingdom Buddha stopped them thrice, since the sustainable peace is the one other notable preaching of Buddhism. *Metta sutta*, *Mettānisamsa sutta*, *Dhajagga sutta*, *Bhāradvāja sutta* ,such *suttas* always emphasized the value of peace. Therefore in this attempt, we hope to analyze how Buddha channeled his preaching on building sustainable peace in the world.

THE VIEW OF PEACE SEAMED IN BUDDHISM.

There are some root courses, which directly responsible for arising inner and outer conflicts. These root courses are known as desire (*lobha*) hatred (*dosa*) illusion (*moha*). The latent disposition of above three unwholesome roots are submerged

in the mind. With contact of the external objects desire (*lobha*) becomes covetousness (*abhijjhā*), hatred (*dosa*) turns out to be ill-will (*vyāpāda*) and illusion (*moha*) comes to be wrong view (*miccādiṭṭhi*). Thus, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views are the dynamic positions of the mind which reinforce the individual to make conflicts or problems in outside world. Thus, psychological process of the individual causes to arise the physical actions in the external world. However, the external conflicts do not originate within mind itself, since mind is intrinsically pure but dependent on external contacts, it becomes impure (*pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkave cittaṃ tañcako āgantukēhi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭaṇ*). This explanation of Buddha clearly emphasizes that internal or external conflicts do not arise only within the man or outer world but they arise due to the interrelation of the internal mind and the external world. This is the theory of cause and effect which is also called in modern world ‘relativism.’ *Mahānidāna sutta* is one of great discourses which make clear the law of causation of origin of different forms of conflicts. The Buddha addressing Venerable Ānanda said “feeling conditions craving, craving conditions seeking, seeking conditions acquisition, acquisition conditions decision making, decision making conditions lustful desire, lustful desire conditions attachment, attachment conditions appropriation, appropriation conditions avarice, avarice conditions guarding of possession and because of the guarding of possession there arise the taking up of stick and sword quarrels, disputes arguments, strife, abuses lying and other evil unskilled states”.(D.II.54) This explanation of Buddha stresses how internal mental defilements come into dynamic circumstances of the external world. Thus, in Buddhism origin and cessation of all forms of conflicts and problems are analyzed with reference to causal genesis.

The peace is the central theme discussed by many societies as it essential fact of surviving human planet. The peaceful atmosphere of the society degenerates due to the confrontation of different conflicts that origin over the religious, political, cultural, and ethnical background and so on. It mentioned in early that conflict is an inevitable fact in human society. Therefore, establishing the peace is also a vital condition in the society. In the process of building the

peace, there are some important Buddhist discourses, which give considerable amount of theoretical and practical subject matters. The main admonishment was given by the Buddha to his first sixty disciples was “Travel in the tour for the well-being and happiness of the mankind as whole” (*bahujana hitāya bahujana sukhāya*). Thus, the sole purpose of the Buddha and his disciples were to establish peace and happiness of the society. Therefore, Buddha is said to be born for the goodness and happiness of the human world “*manussaloka hita sukhātāya jāto*” (Sn.683). His attributive aspect is “Highest Compassion” (*mahā kāruṇika*). At the same time, He was known as the “*Sānti-rājā*” or the “Prince of Peace.” (Jayatilake, K.N, 2008, p.2). He attained this stable peaceful position by himself after understating of reality of the world. He said himself “There arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, comprehension and light regarding things unheard of before”. (S.V.422). Not only He has conceptual attributes of peace, but He was such great human being who never mentally, verbally or physically causes least harm to himself or outer world. Every word expressed by him reason to establish peace in the society. Once, Venerable Ānanda said to Buddha that half of the teaching of the Buddha comprised in the practice of friendliness, and then, the Buddha mentioned that it was not half, but the whole of the teaching comprised practice of friendliness or peace.

THE ESSENE OF PEACE IN THE SOCIETY

The people in modern society seek peace in outer world while organizing different types of programs and conferences to discuss on the matter of peace building and protecting human rights. Whatsoever, the program organized on the matter of peace building; it is ineffective without highlighting the necessity of building inner peace. Before establishing peace in the outer world one should himself establish the inner peace. Once Buddha said “it is not possible, Cunda for him who is stuck in the mud to pull out another who stuck in the mud. But Cunda, it is possible for one who is himself not stuck in the mud to pull out another who is stuck in the mud. In the same way, the person who did not establish in discipline and peace himself cannot bring peace others but person who himself established inner peace and can lead other to the peace”. (M.I.45). The Buddha is the greatest example who first of

all, developed and cultivated peace and calms himself and leads others to peace. The person who has developed inner peace should practice effacement (*sallekho karaṇīyo*) as, “Others will be cruel, we shall not be cruel here..., other will kill living beings, and we shall abstain from killing living beings” (M.I.41). Moreover, His mind should be inclined (*cittam uppādetabbaṃ*) thus, “Other will be cruel, we shall not be cruel here, and others will kill living being we shall abstain from killing living beings. Thus, who mentally practices peace and harmony must have an ability to tolerate any kind violence situation. For an example, the Buddha said to Venerable Phāggunna, “If anyone should give you a blow with his hand, with clod, with a stick, with a knife, you should abandon any desire and any thought based on the household life. And here in you should train thus, my mind will be unaffected and I shall utter no evil words. I shall abide compassionate for his welfare, with mind of loving kindness, (*mettacitto*) without inner hate”. (M.I.123). this is the stable and unswerving inner compassion and loving kindness that should be developed by oneself to keep the peace in the outer world. As it is mentioned above, peace building in society can never be achieved without building peace in mind. Therefore, Buddhism always emphasizes the establishing inner peace than peace in the society. It can very easily be understood that after establishing stable inner peace man himself, it is no need to try hard to establish peace in the society.

The most important doctrine that Buddha has elaborated to create the peaceful atmosphere is cultivation of *Mettā* or loving kindness. This single word has a very broad meaning in the context of bringing about the peace and harmony, not only in the human world but also in whole universe including even unseen beings, flora and fauna.

The word *mettā* is the abstract noun from the word *mitra*, which means “friend” (Jayatilake, K.N. 2008. P.3). The friendliness or loving kindness that Buddhism emphasized is not just friendliness but that is the friendliness should extend towards all living creatures in the human world. *Metta sutta* explains the way of cultivating loving kindness toward all creature as “whatsoever the living creatures there are, moving or still (*tasā vā thāvarā*) without exception, whatever

are long or large, or middle sized or short, small or great. Whatever are seen or unseen, which ever live far or near, whether they already exist or are going to be, let all creatures be happy minded (*sabbesattā bhavantu sukhittā*). One should not humiliated another, one should not despise anyone anywhere, one should not wish anyone misery because of anger or from the notion of repugnance. Just as a mother who protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate unbounded loving-kindness toward all beings, and loving kindness toward the entire world, one should cultivate unbounded love above and below and cross, without obstruction without enmity, without rivalry” (Sn.24). If any confronted party in a conflict can transform their mental attitudes up to the above level of loving-kindness while forgetting all past bad experiences and agitations, peace is not moreover only a concept that cannot be practiced ever.

The loving kindness or friendliness (*mettā*) to be spread toward the all creatures is also mentioned in the Four Sublime Abodes (*brahma vihāra*)-(D.III.196). *Mettā* here means friendly feeling towards others, *Karuṇā* is the compassionate attitudes that arise on the occasions of others’ distress with purpose of the assist or help them. (*Paradukkhesatisādūnarāṃ hadayakampanarāṃ karotīti karuṇā*). *Muditā* is sympathetic joy, which means the ability to rejoice without any jealous by seeing others’ happiness and successes. *Upekkhā* means the equanimity or the ability to tolerate any happy or distressful conditions in neutral sense.

The opposite of the angry, enmity or ill will is loving kindness (*mettā*). Therefore, to overcome such bad attitudes of the individual, he must cultivate the compassion or loving kindness. Buddha said that friendliness should be cultivated to eradicate the ill will “*mettā bhāvetabbā byapāda pahānāya*” (*Udānapali*. 37). At the same time, in *Sallekha sutta* the Buddha said to Cunda “person who has cruelty must practice non cruelty to abstain from it, the person who engage killing must abstain from killing avoid from it. (M.I.46). According to Buddhism, it is not enough only reframing from killing living beings but he must cultivate the positive aspect of loving-kindness. “One refrains from killing creatures, laying aside the stick and the sword, and abides conscientious, full of kindness, love and

compassion towards all creatures and beings, (D.I.4)

THE ROLE OF PEACE IN THE WORLD

Supporting to the establish peace and harmony in the society, Buddha has recommended right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*) for lay people while prohibiting all types of livelihoods which cause harm violation of peace in society. Thus, Buddha prohibited five trades which are harmful to keep peace in society. They are, 1) sale of arms (*satthā*), 2) the sale of human beings or animals (*sattā*), 3) the sale of flesh (*maṃsā*), 4) the sale of intoxicating drinks (*majjā*), 5) and the sale of dangerous and poisonous drugs (*visa*). Today many human right violation and crimes happen in the world owing to the dealing with above trades. No any single country or region can find out in the world where there are no above trades. Each and every country engages in above trades directly or indirectly. Especially the powerful countries of the world while engaging and organizing peace talking programs as well as giving admonish to build peace to the confronted parties very strategically sell their weapon and bullet to foolish combatants of low level countries. When the ruler of the county becomes unrighteous, the people of the county follow the same process. Therefore, ruler must be ideal to the society. Buddhist concept on the ideal king depicted in *Cakkavattisīhānāda sutta* explains role of the king on the matter of peace building in a country. He is the Universal Monarch (*Cakkavatti Rāja*) who rules his country meting out punishment for the offences, but without using stick and sword (*adaṇḍena asattena*). He is such good ruler who practices moral virtue and righteousness. This ideal king advises his fellow men not to kill, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to tell lies, not to use intoxicant. (D.III.62). This concept of the ideal king in Buddhism practically employed by some Buddhist rulers like king Dharmasoka for the purpose of establishing peace in the society after the war.

The Buddha was an ideal leader who practically engaged in spreading of loving-kindness and compassion towards all the living beings without any discrimination. In his daily routine a few hours spent leisurely and remaining all periods of day he assisted people who wanted help. A few such people, he assisted are Aṅgulimāla,

Paṭācārā, Kisāgotami, Sunīta Sopāka, Rādha Brāhmaṇa, Cūlapantaka as well as animal like snake and elephant.

Buddhist concept of peace has practical values as Buddhism has not fought with any human race to spread its doctrine and never Buddha has recommended any holy war against any religion or any race.

CONCLUSION

One of notable major part of our lives is taken up with peaceful activities. If peace is to have any real part to play a major role in resolving problems like ethnic conflict confronted by mankind, then all peaceful activities whether kindness, social welfare guidelines, spending or providing is to help create true well-being and developing potential for a good and meaningful lives those are capable for making peace in the world. The essence of Buddhist peace concepts lies here, in ensuring that peaceful activity simultaneously enhances – improves the quality of human. All the psychological, religious, political and social factors that are directly or indirectly cause on occurring a true peace will establish stability of wholesome nation, wholesome wealth, wholesome economy and wholesome humanity in Buddhist perspective. Therefore, the applicability of above mentioned teachings in Buddhism is extremely significant for the sustainable peace development in the society. It is through the righteous peaceful stability that morally civilized society is developed and sustainable peace and equality establish justice, harmony, human rights, etc. are restored.

Abbreviations:

Dhp	: Dhammapada
D	: Dīgha - Nikāya
M	: Majjhima - Nikāya
S	: Saṃyutta - Nikāya
SN	: Suttaṅgalavilāsinī

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