

THE VIEW OF THE BUDDHIST ABOUT THE CAUSE OF VIOLENCE, CONFLICT, WAR AND METHOD OF REMEDY

by Tran Duc Nam*

Conflict is commonplace wherever and whenever. It happens in every person, every family, or in a large area - between races or between nations; And whenever it does, it leads to suffering or even to the end of the world! So, conflict is a big problem for mankind and a solution to it is one that must be addressed.

Rakhim said, “an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities.” Rakhim also notes that a conflict may be limited to one individual, who is conflicted within himself (the intrapersonal conflict)¹.

INTRODUCTION

Every society has conflicts for its internal and external interests and views. Buddhist teaching teaches ways to prevent the emergence of new conflicts and prevent the escalation of the germs that have already begun. Buddhists seek to achieve this by explaining to everyone involved in conflicts to find the best way to educate their actions, emotions, and understanding of life.

In Buddhism, conflict - originated from the thought, delusion - is considered an immoral, and it needs to be transformed. In the 45

*. Ph.D.Research Scholar Centre for Mahayana Buddhist Studies Department Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjuna Nagar Guntur-522510, Andhra Pradesh, India.

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_\(process\)#Definitions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_(process)#Definitions)

years of the sermon of the Buddha, he made clear that two things: suffering and cessation of suffering: “*One thing and one thing only do I teach, suffering and how to end suffering*”²

In the first sermon in Banares about two thousand five hundred years ago, the Buddha pointed out that the cause of suffering is aspiration or deep as misleading. In another lecture, he taught that a wise man is no longer a fool, he has no dispute with anyone in life:

*“Bhikkhu, as to the source through which perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man: if nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold to, this is the end of the underlying tendency to lust, of the underlying tendency to aversion, of the underlying tendency to views, of the underlying tendency to doubt, of the underlying tendency to conceit, of the underlying tendency to desire for being, of the underlying tendency to ignorance; this is the end of resorting to rods and weapons, of quarrels, brawls, disputes, recrimination, malicious words, and false speech; here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.”*³

Conflict can be understood as the opposition to needs, values, and interests. Conflict can be intrinsic (in itself). The concept of conflict can help to explain many aspects of society such as social disagreement, conflicts of interest, struggles between individuals, groups and organizations. In political terms, “conflict” can refer to wars, revolutions or other struggles, which may include the use of force in the sense of armed conflict. Without proper regulation and resolution, conflict can lead to stress or tension between individuals or groups of people.

2. THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE ARE GREED AND HATRED

In Buddhism, violence is seen as the least intelligent reaction to the conflict. Physical or verbal violence does not create long-term solutions to the problem. Those responsible for the violence cause severe karma by their actions; so, they finally paid the price. Victims

2. Majjhima Nikaya 1. P.140

3. Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*, Wisdom Publications, Boston, Third Edition, 2005, P. 88-89.

of violence or members of their families seek revenge. So, begins the cycle of violence. The root causes of the conflict have not yet been resolved.

Overcoming anger: In the present world, there is war and conflict because of the following causes:

Greed, anger, ignorance

Lack of understanding

Economics and Materialism

Poverty

Fanatic

Political views

Through the Dhammapada, to neutralize the root causes of conflict that arises from anger, it is best to pardon and compassionate towards the enemy, unbending hatred leads to harm

*“He abused me, he beat me,
he defeated me, he robbed me”,
in those who harbour such thoughts
hatred is not appeased.”⁴*

If you are observing the causes of war and conflict, we can see that they all derive from acts such as land grabbing, border tattoos and national sovereignty, fanaticism, ambition, politics or revenge...

Stopping war and conflict is the wish of all. In today's global issues, Buddhism offers the most appropriate advice to prevent war and conflict. For example, in the Dhammapada, the Buddha taught that: Resentment can not extinguish hatred, but only love can quench hatred only. We should all have that attitude without thinking of revenge. The Buddha always advised the Buddhists should have a harmonious attitude to others because it leads to peace from within each person.

“Hatred only dissolves with no hatred

4. Dhammapada 3

*Hatred never cease through hatred in this world;
through love alone they cease.
This is an eternal law”.*⁵

The Buddha also said that the mind can escape from the mental state of being contaminated with the most appropriate long-term solutions. Greed, a sense of self-satisfaction and prejudice that arises in the minds of people, and in an unattended state, can have enormous consequences for the community and for the nation. The Buddha taught his disciples to constantly look inside to identify them in the external conflicts of action and speech, in order to identify them and to express their feelings and feelings, beliefs, values, and my own theory. He teaches how to liberate the negative aspects of the human mind and how to cultivate the constructive aspects. Buddhists learn to identify the causes and conditions of conflict, as well as learn how to make the best possible effort to resolve conflicts.

When the Buddha was a young son, he abandoned the path that could lead to war and conflict to find a way to bring happiness to all living beings.

*“He abused me, he beat me, He defeated me, he robbed me, In those who do not harbour such thoughts hatred is appeased.”*⁶

Buddhism views violence, conflict and war along with all other human factors as the result of causality. Avataṃsakasūtra describes the universe as an infinite crisscross, the interaction of infinite networks that is a glittering jewels, there are countless other faces perfectly intertwined, and each faces the pearl reflects all the faces of each other in this network. Because the crisscross is itself, each jewels and each face of each jewel is endless, so the amount of reflection is infinite. When a stone in this endless network changes in some way, the pearl affects all the other pearls in the net. Indra’s poetic story is very poetic, explaining the supernatural connections that we occasionally witness between seemingly irrelevant events.

All these mistakes, and all the evil. Originating from the

5. Dhammapada 5

6. Dhammapada 6

causal force: When they can not control themselves. In all cases, consistent with the concept of interdependent origination, to make the violence disappear we must destroy its underlying causes. From the Buddhist point of view there are three types of conflict and violence.

Root causes, internal causes and external causes. External influences are actions of one's body or words to a person who goes against the purpose of harmless (ahimsa) to this person, or prevents the happiness of others. Although external influences such as physical and verbal actions or social inequities or conflicts are involved; Buddhism all comes from the inner consciousness of man. These are emotions such as anger, hatred, grievances, contempt, etc., in fact, the root cause of violence is rooted in suffering, by ignorance of the human person. Most of us are not aware of the fact that everything is interrelated and that all actions are fruitful. Most do not realize that all of us are just a living creature.

The cause of human suffering, as explained in Buddhist terms, is greed, anger and delusion. Negative traits and unwholesome fundamental harms within us and the external effects of dangers are called poisonous, painful and physically and mentally ill for our lives.

In the example of the Buddha, Buddhists promote ethical life. They never harm others, loot or steal from others. In the Sutra, the Buddha says there are two main causes of war and conflict, craving and sensual enjoyment. Considering the causes of earlier and present wars and conflicts, we find that craving and material needs are the main causes of these wars and conflicts. The Buddha explained that the person who has the ability to master the senses and eliminate craving, he will not tend to struggle or hurt others, bully or abuse, steal or spoil property of others. In his teachings, Buddha emphasizes the cause of conflict. Buddhism does not value temporary solutions. Because if the causes of war and conflict are not removed forever, war and conflict will continue again and again.

The Cakkavati-Sihanada sutta and the Kutadanta Sutta point out another aspect of war and conflict. It is a struggle for natural resources and material possessions. When people try to accumulate wealth, there is a struggle between one person and the other, with

the group and the country and the other country. The scramble gradually led to conflict, war. Thus, Buddhism advises people to think of the impermanence of matter. When people see the nature of ephemeral, one can go out the fierce struggle.

In the Sakka-panha Sutta, the Emperor asked the Buddha, the gods and human beings always wanted to live in harmony, but why are they fighting and conflict? The Buddha explained that there are two psychological factors that give rise to conflict. It is jealous and dull. Psychologically wanting to but not be able to stand to see other than himself is the direct cause of war and conflict.

Desire and arrogance are also the cause of war and conflict. In human history, mankind creates war and conflict to protect their arrogance and ambition. The Buddha advised Buddhists to eliminate such pride from their lives. Because of craving and the idea of revenge, war and conflict arise. The Buddha mentions another cause of war. There are some who say that they themselves, their religion or their country is the highest, and others, other religions, and other nations are lower. The Buddha taught in the Dhammapada that the winners are hated, the losers live in grief. Both sides are affected by the war. The Culla-bodhi Jataka says that hatred and the desire for revenge destroy human life. Just as two sticks hit each other, fire broke out destroying both trees. According to Buddhism, in the war, no one wins. Instead, the Buddha emphasizes the importance of self-win myself in front of my own bad habits.

In the Dhammapada the Buddha taught that winning his lust is greater than winning thousands of enemies outside. He always recommends that we see our faults instead of finding fault with others. Because when people see the fault of others, conflict begins. The Buddha always advised us to reflect on ourselves to eliminate our shortcomings. Once, when the Buddha was sitting meditating under a tree, a group of young people came to him and asked if he saw a woman passing by, the Buddha replied: *“Do not think of what people do or do not, but think about what you have done or not.”*

Often, people blame or to lay the responsibility at others for failing to see their faults and responsibilities. And that is the cause of all conflicts. So, the Buddha advised us to define our responsibility and to treat others well. He advises us to be compassionate, even

for the enemy. In the Kakacūpama sutta from Majjhima Nikaya Lord Buddha praised the patience of a monk when he had given the robbers compassionate even though they cut off part of the body of the monk and made this monk Increased pain to death.

3. APPLY THE PRACTICE OF THE FIVE PRECEPTS INTO DAILY LIFE

In Buddhism, there are many ethical principles, but the basic moral of Buddhists is the five precepts. The Five Precepts were set up by the Buddha for lay Buddhists to know what to do and what not to do. The Five Precepts are also an important principle of creating a special personality for self, bringing peace and belief to the family, community, society and all living beings.

Five precepts

I keep the precepts without harming all living things.

I keep the precepts not take what others do not give.

I keep the precepts No Sexual Misconduct

I keep the precepts curb of speech of imprecision.

I would like to keep the precepts no drink and drug causing confusion.

The most prominent rule of moral behavior in Buddhism is the five precepts.

As lay people, we have received the five precepts, but because we are so busy, we do not apply the practice of the five precepts to our daily lives. In March 2000 the UNESCO organization published a manifesto called Manifesto 2000. In the statement, there are six points to promote peace. The United Nations announced in the first decade of the 21st century that we will strive to promote and build a culture of peace and non-violence. The six points of the Manifesto are very similar to the five Buddhist precepts. If everyone practices the six points of the Manifesto or the five five precepts of Buddhims, we will have calm and peace all over the world.

According to tradition of Buddhism after receiving the five precepts, you are encouraged to meet again every two weeks to recite the precept, to talk about the five precepts, to learn how to properly apply the practice of the five precepts to the daily life. We have paths but do not recognize ourselves on that path to go together as a river. So, we must find ourselves a part of the Sangha.

Our family can be a Sangha, the class can be a Sangha, the work agency can become a Sangha, the parliament can become a Sangha so that we have the opportunity to practice six Point of Manifesto 2000.

4. PROTECT THE LIFE OF ALL SPECIES

The first of the five precepts is the protection of life, not only of human life but also all animal, herbs, and soil. It is a practice protecting the environment. To make us happy, we must protect animals, plants and rocks. If people over-exploit Earth's resources, it will cause great harm. Because they want to get rich, they produce foods that consume them and bring into their bodies and souls toxic substances such as hatred, violence and fear. It is the poison of the body and the mind by the way of consumption. We have to consume consciously, not accept consumption and produce harmful substances that can create conflict, illness, tension, hatred, fear in the body and in the mind. It is a great way to protect yourself, protect your family, your community and your society. Without practicing conscience we will have no escape from route. We have to produce conscious, not produce toxic products. We must consume consciously, not consuming harmful substances.

The practice of the first precept can bring peace to all. Legislators often concerned about that. They have to enact laws that prohibit the production of products that may introduce toxins such as fear, anger, hatred or despair in the body and soul.

Parents and educators are not enough, I think businessmen and politicians must practice together. You have to help us, either by promulgating laws that prohibit the production of toxin products or by educating people in consumption, should only consume healthy substances for the body and mind myself. The Buddha shows us the importance of life to all beings:

“All tremble at violence; all fear death.
Putting oneself in the place of another,
one should not kill nor cause another to kill.”⁷

7. Dhammapada 129

The Dalai Lama said, he did not see any reason why animals must be made meat for human consumption when there were so many substitutes meat. Mahayana Buddhism exemplifies the vegetarian lifestyle. Nibbana Sutra says, "Eating meat dissolves the seed of compassion." Apart from not killing sentient beings, the Buddha also advised us not to hurt others.

5. DO NOT EXPLOIT PEOPLE AND THE EARTH.

The second is very clear: Do not exploit people, do not exploit the planet earth. We must be able to produce many thoughtful thoughts, thoughts of understanding and love, tolerance and forgiveness. When the practice of thinking is speech, right speech, bringing knowledge and hope for everyone. Our action is good karma. That is the practice of building peace. We talk a lot about peace but we have not done to build peace. This precept does not mean merely stealing, it also involves renouncing anything that is not honest, misusing or exploiting, because all are expressions of passion and selfish.

"Whosoever here in this world takes nothing that is not given to him. Whether it be long or short, coarse or fine, beautiful or ugly, him I call a Brahman."⁸

Positive application to non-stealing is "dana" - giving.

*"Hasten to do good;
Restrain your mind from evil.
He who is slow in doing good,
His mind delights in evil."*⁹

6. LIVE SIMPLE, LESS CONSUMPTION THAT THERE IS HAPPINESS

We can express our love for this planet by using less electricity, using less gas. We know very well that oil and gas are not enough for everyone. Countries like India or China is very populated. If every citizen wants a car, there is not enough oil and gas to supply it. To be aware of this is enlightenment, that is right-thinking. Living simple, low consumption is our only escape from route.

8. Eugene Watson Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends* translated from the original Pāli text of the Dhammapada Commentary (409)

9. Dhammapada 116

The third is ‘abandoning illegal sex’. In the Buddhist sutras, the Buddha explains that keeping the precepts of non-adultery is part of the Five Precepts, not rape and kidnapping, as involuntary expression of both emotion and violence.

Legitimate sex helps people to be noble, free from all fears and dangers from inside and outside:

Again, without the virtue, the disciple of the aristocrats renounced the misconduct. In doing so, he offers freedom from danger, freedom from hostility, freedom from the oppression to countless beings. When given the freedom from danger, freedom from hostility, freedom from the oppression of innumerable sentient beings, he attains part of the infinite freedom from danger, freedom from hostility, and freedom from repression. This is the third gift.

7. LIVING HAPPILY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

Happiness is possible, if we return to the present moment, return to the breath, aware that we are living, and that the supernatural of life are present in us and around us. Just sitting still, letting go, can touch the miraculous of life. It has the power to heal and nourish oneself and happiness will come immediately in the present moment.

The Buddha taught us to live happily in the present moment. During the time of the Buddha, there is a businessman named Anāthapindaika. He learned a lot from the Buddha and tried to apply what he learned to his family life, so his family was very happy. One day he led 500 of his business friends to hear the lecture. In the lecture for businessmen that day, the Buddha repeats the phrase “*live in the present moment, five times.*” He knows very well those entrepreneurs are anxious, thinking about the future. They have no time for themselves, their children and their families. The Buddha wants to remind entrepreneurs, happiness was present now and here. We just need to breathe mindfulness and return to the present moment we will recognize the conditions of happiness that are present now and here.

Current care is also future care because the future is made of

the materials of the present. Of course, we have the right to design for the future, but we do not need to worry too much about the future. That is what the Buddha wants to say to us: Live happy in the present. That is the message that we can send to our friends.

The fourth precept is 'do not lie or give up the lie'. The lies come from the heart lust, hatred or fear. If you lie, that is because you want something, or have decided to hurt someone, or because of any reason that is afraid to tell the truth. Therefore, the lack of honesty, it originated in an immoral mental state. Positive expression to deny the words the lie is 'Satya', that is to say honest words.

Do not lie with the meaning of no evil behavior, causing danger hostile toward oneself, others, and beings; hinder the freedom and happiness of you and me. Moreover, life has no definite pattern. Deception is the cause of stress and depression other terrible issues. It is only useful and even necessary at a certain time. when the our safe area or honesty puts us at risk we should not choose the truth. This is called the means for ourselves and others.

8. EXERCISE THE BREATH

I would like to invite you to sit comfortably for a minute or two to identify the happiness of being present and here. We do not need to run to find happiness in the future. Breathing in, I invited my dad to breathe in with me. Exhale, I invited my mother to breathe out with me. Breathe in, you feel light, do you feel as light as a child? Exhale, I feel free, do you feel free like me?

Breathing in, I saw the Buddha in every single cell of my body because I was a student, I was his continuity. Exhaling, I smiled at the Buddha in every single cell of my body. And the last precept of the Five Precepts is to 'give up the use of intoxicated, toxic substances', causing loss of consciousness. This means giving up some sort of alcohol and drugs. Hazardous substances or stimulants such as beer, alcohol, cocaine and heroin cause us to lose our minds, have unwholesome effects on those around us - inability to see the results of our actions. We trigger getting drunk is a deliberate way to make us lose our awareness.

The fifth guide observes the causes and effects of consumer

behavior on alcohol and addictions such as drugs, the Buddhist towards healthy behavior. Alcohol and drugs are the most obvious cause of chronic insanity, lack of morality and responsibility, uncontrolled lusts, shameless injustice, inadequate acknowledgment, wrong in action, and ease be provoked, even murder.

In modern times, every conflict leads to suffering. The worst is leading to a nuclear war or something similar to being done by evil thoughts and it is a violent tool to sow suffering for all humanity, destroy all life on the planet our crystal. We do our best to launch the wheel of peace by solidarity with our compatriots in the duty of protecting and rebuilding our country. We work to expand our solidarity front to all peoples in the world, to create conditions for the development of friendly cooperation, peaceful coexistence around the world and the protection of the whole human race species. *“Conquest begets enmity; the conquered live in misery; the peaceful live happily having renounced conquest and defeat.”*¹⁰

To build a peaceful world right here, where to start? From each person. If there is no healthy human being, how can one expect a morally good social relationship?

It is difficult to avoid interactions and conflicts between cultures. Once we can not stop the interaction, we should absorb the positive elements and eliminate negative elements, harmony in diversity, avoid the assimilation. Each culture and tradition have positive characteristics. It is important to know how. How to acquire a culture, cultures exist parallel, harmony not merged. That is our duty, to apply Buddha’s teachings. Conflict comes from the self, self-resolution, through the moral standards of Buddhism, not causing suffering for others: *“To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one’s mind. This is the teaching of the Buddhas.”*¹¹

These three criteria are the basis of moral teachings, which help us live a happy life. These norms will nurture the development of universal love, out of individualism. Particularly the doctrine of Emptiness, No-Self, can help people escape from the bondage

10. Dhammapada 201

11. Dhammapada 183

of desire. H.S. Prasad said, “We can say that recognizing the idea of emptiness can change our minds, habits, tendencies, values and attitudes, the necessary elements of moral development. The teaching of Emptiness is a valuable instrument for the establishment of peace, harmony, ecological balance and justice, moral practice, social development and a high level of life.

Today’s civilizations meet in the spirit of sympathy, exchange, which contributes to increased cooperation, mutual learning between culture and religion. The problem is solved when the main cause of the conflict is eliminated, ie No-self. Conflict can take place at many levels, such as the individual, the community, the society, the nation ... Let’s practice the virtue, benefit everyone, minimize conflict such as Shantideva taught in *Bodhicāryāvatāra*: “*I vow to be the guardian of the helpless person, who guides the traveler on the road, the boat, the bridge for all who want to go through the sea of birth and death.*”

In short, Buddha’s teachings can be used to solve the present problems permanently, because Buddhism handles the root cause of it. War and conflict arise because of the political needs of individuals or groups. The Buddha introduced many principles to prevent war and conflict. Integrity, mutual respect, sharing of rights, compassion, patience and respect are important principles that need to be practiced of all one.

References

- Acharya Buddharakkhita, *Dhammapada: Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, translated from the Pali, introduction by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1985.
- Eugene Watson Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends* translated from the original Pāli text of the Dhammapada Commentary.
- Venerable Narada Mahathera, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, reprinted by the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation Taipei, Taiwan, July, 1998.
- Zen Thich Nhat Hanh, *You Are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment*, Published 2009.
- Zen Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of Understanding: Commentaries on the Prajñāparamita Heart Sutra*, Published 1988.
- Zen Thich Nhat Hanh, *Keeping the Peace: Mindfulness and Public Service*, Published 2005
- Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*, Cambridge University Press 2000
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_\(process\)#Definitions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_(process)#Definitions)
- <http://polgollekusalahadhamma.blogspot.com/2013/10/buddhist-perspective-on-social-issue.html>.