

# BUDDHIST APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE WORLD PEACE

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations, established on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945 aims basically to 'maintain peace and security' (Article 1, UN Charter) in the world upholding the human dignity, equality and equity to all its habitants. To achieve this underlined goal, the UN has been from time to time launching various programs to eradicate those factors, which have the potential to endanger the peace and stability in the world. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aims to accomplishing sustainable development by eradicating poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and women empowerment; reducing child mortality; improving material health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development (MDGs Report 2015) could be cited here as one of such programs. The world through global effort has made a sufficient gain in ameliorating human conditioning as evident from the MDGs Report 2015. Despite the execution of this and other projects and programs of UN, still, there exist problems like climate change due to the destruction of nature, large scale conflict and wars, social and economic inequality, poverty, religious conflicts, government accountability and transparency, food and water security, lack of education, safety, and lack of economic opportunity and

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employment as per the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Survey 2017. These problems need our immediate attention to be solved, as some of them, such as poverty, social and religious conflict, inequality, discrimination and etc. have enough potential to cause unrest and violence in the world. Hence, in this background the present paper purports to discuss, from Buddhist point of view, the problems obstructing world peace, their root causes with their respective solution by prescribing a path to the attainment of sustainable world peace.

## BUDDHISM

As we know Buddhism, which has a long history of almost 2600 years, is based on the solemn teachings of the Buddha who delivered numerous discourses dealing with the different aspects of human life, such as social, ethical, philosophical, psychological, spiritual, political, and economic, besides the principle of good governance and national unity as well. Some of his discourses also apprise us about the facts, which cause personal and social downfall; the benefits that can be gained by house-holders even without renouncing the mundane life and so on. Notably Buddhism, in course of time, cross the boundaries of the land of its origin and was disseminated in different parts of the world, and wherever it reached it assimilated in its fold certain local traits. Consequently, we find different variants of Buddhism, but, all these variants have no two opinions with regard to the fundamental principles of Buddhism. So, herein, Buddhism means the fundamental principle of Buddhism, which consists of the Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, Middle path, Law of Kamma, Devine Abiding, Moral Precepts, Cultivation of Mind or Calm and Insight, Wisdom, Mindfulness and so on, all interconnect to each other. In fact, these teachings of the Buddha prescribes social and economic principles, ethical norms and values, and etc., the applicability of which could still be useful to deal with the existential problems, faced by the humans, and their solution, as they were in the past. As exhorted by the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya.2.3.159, VRI. 2.73), these principles (*dhamma*) are *akālika* (timeless), *sandiṭṭhiko* (empirical), *ehiṇṇiko* (verifiable), *viññūhi* (known by the wise)

and individually understandable. Hence, they may be adopted as a standard parameter to examine and verify any problem, subject or event, to ensure the sustainable peace in the world.

## SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 April 2016 recognizes “sustaining peace”... should be broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance.” (United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/262, p.2). Admittedly, this resolution sets ‘sustainable peace’ as a goal to be achieved by the world community by preventing conflict and its root cause through reconstruction and development, and fixes responsibility of different stake holders of the world. This resolution, as apparent from its perusal of its various aspects, considers conflict (social and religious) as the root cause of unrest and violence in the different part of the world.

## CONFLICT

Conflict refers to ‘a serious disagreement and argument about something’ (Collins dictionary). The Cambridge dictionary defines conflict as ‘an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles’ or ‘fighting between two or more groups of people or countries’. Conflicts can either be within one person, or they can involve several people or groups. Conflicts arise because there are needs, values or ideas that are seen to be different, and there is no means to reconcile the dispute. Very often, conflicts lead to fights, or even wars (wikipedia). Empirical knowledge suggests that there several types of conflict such as social, religious, gender,

regional, individual and so on.

### THE UN APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE

In order to end the conflicts, prevalent in world today in form of terrorism in various parts of the world (including India, Afghanistan and France) the resolution passed by the UN General Assembly (p.2) emphasizes on “the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes, strengthening the rule of law at the international and national levels, and promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, sustainable development, national reconciliation and unity, including through inclusive dialogue and mediation, access to justice and transitional justice, accountability, good governance, democracy, accountable institutions, gender equality and respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms”. In order to achieve this goal this resolution outlines the different steps, such as engagement in political dialogue, economic development, end of discrimination and making effort to establish a just and sustainable society. But, nowhere, it pays attention to the experience of our past heritages, such as Buddhism. The past record of Buddhism clearly testifies its potentials in promoting a culture of peace and harmony in the society. Originated in India, wherever it was disseminated it readily assimilated the local traits to ensure the establishment of harmonious, just and peaceful society. It, at no point, tried to destabilize any social norms, beneficial and conducive to the human existence. In this regard the name of Asoka could be cited here who attained fame in the world history not because of his war of Kaling but because of his dissemination of Buddhism (i.e., the conquest of Dhamma).

Evident from the historical records, Buddhism begins its journey dealing with the existential problem ‘*dukkha*’ (suffering) and its solution ‘*dukkhanirodha*’ (cessation of suffering) (Alagaddūpamasutta, Majjhima Nikaya 3.2.22.246). Suffering, generally, creates an environment of unrest and unsatisfactoriness; and its cessation establishes a regime of peaceful, serene, and harmonious existence. The fundamental principles of Buddhism are potent enough to establish a trouble-free society, and because

of this potentiality it has long been famed as a religion of peace and non-violence. Increasing faith (of people) in its inherent vitality to establish peaceful regimen has continuously been attracting a large number of people of the world to its fold in order to seek relief and guidance at a time when there exists the fear psychosis almost everywhere in the world in form of social conflict, violence and war, terrorism and etc, as could be marked by the various violent incidences (war and terrorism) taking place in the areas like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, India, Afghanistan, France and etc. Consequently peace seems to be a distant dream despite the fact that International bodies like the UN and etc. are constantly engaged in peace-building efforts to neutralize the world from war, terror, conflict, violence and so on. In fact, the act of violence has been occurring now even in the areas where none has ever expected of such things. In this background, it appears a prime time to think over the vitality of Buddhism in order to establish sustainable peace in the world. Its utility has, in fact, increased more than ever. So, this is the high time to appreciate and harness the inherent potential of Buddhism to create a peaceful atmosphere in the world. There is no denial of the fact that the outlook of Buddhism on peace and violence gives us a hope to accord the global efforts to create new sets of values with regard to the ways people manage conflict and maintain peace via non-violent means. (Yeh, T.D., p.2)

#### PROBLEMS TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE FROM BUDDHIST PROSPECTIVE

In order to this, first of all, it appears essential to assess the fundamental problems, causing constant strife, violence and war in the world, and to understand the concept of sustainable peace, as Buddhism first identifies the problem, and thereafter the end of the problems. Remarkable to note that the problems as underlined above are not the outcome of few days or few years or few decades, rather they have deep-rooted link in our past, as they (these problems) represent the continuity of the retributions of our past deeds. So while finding out the solutions of such problems, being faced by the world today, we should strive to make optimum use of our past knowledge and heritage, as enshrined in Buddhism. Buddhism (The First Noble Truth) out rightly recognizes the universality of

suffering related to the human existence as birth, decay, diseases, death, association with the undesirable ones, separation from the beloved one, not getting what one desires (Mahāvagga 1.6.14, VRI. 13). As outlined by the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Survey 2017 there are several problems including the various types of conflict, causing obstacle to the establishment of sustainable peace. Even though the First Noble Truth does not mention directly the violence, conflict etc. as form of suffering, but, on the basis of aforesaid description, it could be placed under the categories of suffering association with the undesirable ones, separation from the beloved one, not getting what one desires. Conflict, in fact, connotes a state of mind that is unable to make an appropriate decision, and usually fought with propaganda and violence.

However, to understand its solution 'sustainable peace' from the perspective of Buddhism, it seems imperative to have a comprehensive idea of Buddhist worldview. It is so because, as Buddhism believes, Siddhartha Gautama became Buddha (awakened one) only after knowing the real characteristic of world by understanding the laws that govern the universe, and was able to identify the existential problem, its cause and its cessation. The laws governing the universe are said to be eternally operative whether the Buddha discovered them or not (Yeh, T. D., p.92). The most important among these laws is the 'Dependent Origination' which, in respect of the existence, postulates the maxim that '*Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti. Imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti*' (*Saṃyuttanikāyapāli*, 1.3.1.22, VRI.1.25) i.e., "*This being, that becomes; from the arising of this, that arises; this not becoming, that does not become; from the ceasing of this that ceases*" (Davids, 1921-25, p.439). That means nothing exists in the universe on its own or independent of other things i.e. a thing exists in relation to the other thing. All worldly phenomena, elements, existence and etc. are, in fact, directly or indirectly connected to one another. This connection represents the relation of cause and effect. Any alteration in this relational condition influences everything else. This principle, thus, portrays the Buddhist view of the cosmic world and human being that they are interconnected, interdependent and ever changeable, which we hardly perceive on account of being deluded and attached to the

mundane phenomena.

The interdependent and interconnect nature of existence or things enjoins upon us to develop a sense of responsibility for our behaviours and appreciation, sacrifice and compassion for others. This realization of the true nature of existence inspires/demands us to perform amicable, compassionate and altruistic action. This could be accomplished by developing “Devine Abidings (*Brahmavihāra*, also known as *appamaññā*, ‘immeasurable’), consisting of four mental faculties – loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), expounded by the Buddha (*Sangitisuttam*, *Dīgha Nikāya*.3.10.308; *Cetasikapaicchedvaṇṇanā*, Tika-co-Pāli/ *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*. 2.8) as a corollary to his realization of cosmic reality. The *Brahmavihāra* encompasses and benefits infinite number of beings in its fold. Evident from the exhortation of Buddha, the cultivation of these four mental faculties together with the Four Noble Truths works as guiding principle to create a peaceful, happy and harmonious environment for the existence of both sentient and non-sentient entities in the world. These two sets of Buddha’s teachings delineate the combination of altruistic attitude, wisdom and deep mindfulness, as the essential requirement for the creation of an ideal state of existence.

The Buddhist way of looking at the world, as discussed above, comes closest to the one dynamic, complex peace theory in which the world is “precisely a process based on diversity in symbiotic interaction” (Johan Galtung, 1993: 23). Galtung views further that peace is not a stable, end state in this world of multi-leveled plurality, but a more interactive process of a series of changing and balancing acts, an on-going dialectic between our actions and the world. This contingent view of peace, as shared by many peace scholars (Brock-Utne, 1997; Galtung, 1993; Galtung & Ikeda, 1995; Turpin & Kurtz, 1997) is similar to what Buddhist perceives peace to be. Apparently, this is in line with the Buddhist worldview, based on the principle of dependent origination, which emphasizes the mutual influence of all the elements involved in any situation (Yeh, T.D.) The interdependent characteristic of the occurrence of any situation necessitates adoption of a holistic approach about peace, instead of peace in separate contexts such as societies,

families, regions and so on. In this background it may be concluded that both the modern concept and the Buddhist view are almost same in the sense that both recognizes not a single but multiple causes, responsible for obstructing and establishing sustainable peace, which cannot be regarded as permanent but changeable, as Buddhism maintains “*aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppādavayadhammino*” (*Dīgha Nikāya*. 2.3.221, VRI. 2.117).

## BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT

Having identified the problem, Buddhism (The Second Noble Truth) acknowledges certain causal forces that hinder the harmonious and peaceful existence in the world. From this point of view violence and conflict are also the byproduct of causes and conditions. On analysis of the causes of violence and conflict, we identify their three aspects: the external, the internal, and the root (Shih, Yin-shun, 1980).

### THE EXTERNAL CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS

Man, generally, aspires to live peacefully and happily without being hurt by anyone and anything. Anything done contrary to this aspiration disturbs one's peaceful and happy existence, and, thus causes the origin of conflict. Identifying this aspect of people's aspiration to live a peaceful and happy life with no harms the Buddha teaches that none should try to inflict any harm to others, physically and vocally at personal level, as all beings are afraid of violence and resent harsh words. If we inflict physical and verbal harm upon others, it usually generates hatred and conflict, which, in turn, have the potential of causing harm to our peaceful existence, and create violent environment, as evident from the following statement of the Buddha, recorded in the Dhammapada (Bhikkhu Pesala), a Buddhist text.

“All trembles at violence or afraid of sticks and knife, all fear death. Comparing oneself with others do not harm, do not kill” (Daṇḍavaggo, Dhammapada, verse no. 129, VRI. 29, Treasury of Truth, p. 438).

“All are frightened of being hurt or of any threat to one's



life. To all, life is dear. Seeing that others feel the same as oneself, equating others to oneself, refrain from harming or killing” (Daṇḍavaggo, *Dhammapada*, verse no. 130, VRI. 29, Treasury of Truth, p. 441)

Similarly, the human behaviours of using foul words to blame others, and arrogant words humiliating others develop hatred and resentment, which in turn, produce conflicts and render malicious thoughts. The malicious thoughts generally harm others. This tendency is not confined only to the affected person, but also to the person possessing such thoughts. In nutshell, the physical and vocal wrong activities could be marked as the external causes of conflict and violence.

### THE INTERNAL CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS

Buddhism avows that physical and verbal activities, whether unwholesome or wholesome, are basically the articulation of mind. In this context the *Dhammapada* clearly states:

“Mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states.  
Mind is chief; and they are mind-made.  
If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind,  
Suffering follows as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox.”  
(*Dhammapada*, verse no. 1)

“Mind is the forerunner of (all good) states.  
Mind is chief, and they are mind-made.  
If one speaks or acts with a pure mind,  
Happiness follows as one’s own shadow that never leaves.”  
(*Dhammapada*, verse no. 2)

These two verses of *Dhammapada* affirms that the good or bad behaviors originate from the state of human mind, and react to the external stimuli, leading to the state conflict and violence, or, peace and happiness. That is, it the state of human mind that operates internally to generate the causal forces of conflict and violence, and the peace as well. In other words, the causes of any conflict or violence exist internally ingrained in the stream of our consciousness. This is why, whenever we confront physical or

verbal threat, it is but natural to feel fear, resentment, anger, dislike, hatred and so on, which affect mind negatively, and perforce to take resort of violence. So in this background the state of mind could be marked as internal causal force of violence and conflict.

### THE ROOT CAUSE OF VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS

As root cause of violence and conflicts, Buddhism assert that delusion, greed and hatred are those ultimate causal forces which lead to the state of suffering, inflicted by violence and conflict. Delusion covers the intrinsic characteristic of cosmic reality (*Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā.6.320*), and thus we are ignorant of the worldview. Consequently we fail to cognize the reality of the world, and as such we are unable to find out what is wrong or right. Under the sway of delusion we covet to grab others' property (*Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā.6.320*), and if we fail in our attempt to grab it, or, are prevented by someone from grabbing, hatred arises, which develops in us the tendency to harm others (*Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā.6.320*). Under the influence of delusion we hardly realize that things are inter-related and interdependent, and ones action may affect others also. Such attitudes result in the development of wrong views or opinion that that perceives things in a distorted way. We are not impartial to view things. Consequently, we ignore the fact that as we sow, so we reap. Naturally, ones hatred begets others' hatred i.e., hatred never appeases hatred. In this regard the *Dhammapada* clearly states:

“Hatred never ceases through hatred in this world;  
through love alone does it cease. This is an eternal law.”  
(*Dhammapada*, verse no. 5)

In this background, it may be concluded that Buddhism identifies 'delusion' as the very root cause of violence and conflict, which prevents us to live peacefully. Due to delusion we are unable to make correct assessment of the event and react accordingly. Without discerning the causes, development and effects of specific events, we are inevitably causing conflicts and doing harm to others as well as ourselves all the time. Even wars between states come out of great fear and the collective ignorance (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2003).

Having enumerating the external, internal and root causes of the problem (of violence and conflict), it appears pertinent to mention here the Buddhist view with regard to the cause of suffering (which encompasses even the violence and conflict). As per Buddhism (the Second Noble Truth) the root cause of suffering is craving (*taṇhā/trṣṇā*) that leads to recurrent existence, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there (*Majjhima Nikāya*.1.8.91, VRI. 1.61). It is of three types, namely, desire to enjoy sensual pleasure (*kāma-taṇhā*), desire for continuity in existence (*bhava-taṇhā*) to enjoy sensual objects, and to earn the fame and prosperity (*vibhava-taṇhā*). *Vibhava-taṇhā* also refers to the desire to annihilate self or other that comes in ones way to hinder the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Basically, all the three types of craving are more or less associated with the enjoyment of sensual pleasure. Man always craves for gratifying his sensual pleasure at any cost. Consequently, he indulges in various kinds of moral and immoral activities, which yield results accordingly. That is, on account of performing good action, one yield good result and enjoys happiness while the doer of immoral action yields bad resultant and hence suffers. Even the state of happiness, being impermanent in nature causes suffering, and, thus, we remain unsatisfied. In fact craving is insatiable, as the sensual objects, being variegated, sweet and pleasant disturb the mind in diverse forms (*Suttanipāta*. 1.3.50, VRI. 93). Man always craves for enjoying the new objects. In a sense, his desire always renewed itself, and failure to accomplish it or being hindered to attain it begets hatred leading to violence. In this regard the Buddha clearly says, “From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear” (*Dhammapada*. 16. 216, VRI. 40). This description of the root causes of problem clearly shows that the three aspects of the causal forces as external, internal and fundamental are nothing but the different way of narrating the cause of suffering (*dukkhasamudaya*).

## BUDDHIST APPROACHES TO PEACE

Buddhism proceeds with suffering and cessation of suffering. With these two objectives, it prescribes a central methodology in form of the Four Noble Truths to locate the problem, to diagnose the cause of problem, to envision the solution, and to prescribe

the remedy in form of Middle path, consists of eight factors (*Mahākkhandhaka*, Mahāvagga, Vinaya Piṭka.1.6.13, VRI.13). Though the Four Noble Truths appear somewhat philosophical, its applicability could lead to the betterment of world, as they are designed to enable people to alleviate suffering and to realize a peaceful and harmonious state of existence at all level. Applying the first two truths, the problem of violence and conflict and the causal forces behind these problems, now turns come to the remaining two Noble Truths.

The Third Noble Truths clearly mandates that the cessation of problems is possible, by eradicating completely their root causes, identified as craving (*tanha*) (*Majjhima Nikāya*.1.8.9.135, VRI.1.90) as the *Dhammapada* (16. 216, VRI. 40) clearly states that there is no grief and fear for him who is wholly free from craving. The root cause(s) of the problem of violence and conflict could be addressed by treading on the Middle Path, which is also known as Noble Eightfold path, as it consists of eight factors, namely; right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (*Dīgha Nikāya*. 6.375, VRI. 1.139; *Majjhima Nikāya*.1.1.10.135, VRI.1.90). This path enables us to live happily and peacefully; though, its idealistic approach is to end the repeated existence. These factors work as directive principles or act as the lever of social equilibrium in maintaining the balance of life while avoiding the two extremes of suffering – indulgence in sense-pleasure and self-mortification. How could the eight factors of Middle Path be helpful in establishing sustainable peace may be discussed as under:

1. Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*) refers to the knowledge of Four Noble Truths, suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*Majjhima Nikāya*.1.1.10. 135, VRI. 1.90). It focuses on the practice to develop the right and impartial vision to understand the real nature of all component things i.e. impermanent, suffering, and insubstantiality. This understanding presents the real picture of worldview and human beings. Consequently, we understand the interdependent and interconnected nature

of worldly phenomena. Also we know that the human being is composed of mind and matter. Mind is further composition of consciousness, and psychic factors which act as polluter and purifier of mind. The polluted mind as state above brings forth suffering, like conflict and violence while the purified mind ensures our happy and peaceful existence (Khandhasaṃyutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya.1.8.100). The *Khandhasaṃyutta* further states that attachment (greed), hatred and delusion pollute our mind (Saṃyutta Nikāya.1.8.100), and drive us to indulge in conflict and violence, and other such negative activities. So we should reflect on the negative forces which forces for wrongdoings, and strive to eradicate the causal forces of negative activities by developing positive forces like detachment, goodwill and wisdom, which enable us to penetrate into the real characteristic of things.

2. Right Resolve (*Sammā Saṅkappa*): Understanding things in right perspective, it enjoins upon us to resolve to renunciation (of excessive indulgence in sensual pleasure), goodwill towards other, and non-violence to violence (*Majjima Nikāya*.1.1.10.135, VRI. 1.90) In other words, it refers to the right thought of abandoning objects of conflict causer sensual pleasure, harming others, and violence (of any sort). The implied meaning of this is that one should not indulge in those activities which are harmful, rather should develop the tendency to be compassionate to others. Buddhism even perceives craving for sensual pleasure as a causal force of violence and other vices.
3. Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*): As referred above vocal wrongdoings causes fear, distress, hatred and so on one should always uses right speech while dealing with others. For this it is necessary to discard the practice of all sorts of falsehood (*Majjima Nikāya*.1.1.10.135, VRI. 1.90).
4. Right Action (*Sammā Kammanta*): Similar to verbal wrongdoings, the physical misdeeds also bring forth strife and violence. To escape from such problems, one should refrain from performing the immoral physical

deeds - killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct (*Majjima Nikāya*.1.1.10.135, VRI. 1.90). The physical misdeeds amount to transgress the ones life, property and body.

5. Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*): The right livelihood enjoins to earn livelihood through wholesome means and fare dealing. One should not earn livelihood by means of trade in weapons, intoxicants, slaughtering animals, and human trafficking (*Majjima Nikāya*.1.1.10.135, VRI. 1.90). Transgression of this factor pushes us to indulge in negative activities. The availability of arms contrary to the right means of livelihood enables a person or, to indulge in violence.
6. Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*): It enjoins to endeavour for the non-origination of unwholesome thought that has not arisen, the abandonment of the unwholesome thought that has arisen, the growth of arisen wholesome thought, and the origination of wholesome thought that has not arisen as yet (*Majjima Nikāya*.1.1.10.135, VRI. 1.90). It implicitly recommends man to apply his mind and efforts towards the realization of good, and to consider the outcome of the correspondingly bad idea if allowed to develop into action. That means all our efforts should be oriented towards developing the thought, aimed at solving the problems faced by man.
7. Right Awareness (*Sammā Sati*): It refers to man's constant mindfulness or attentiveness in respect of the various activities of body (*kāya*), feeling (*vedanā*), mind (*citta*) and mental states i.e. *dhamma* (MN.1.1.10.135, VRI. 1.90). One should always be attentive to get rid of greed, envy, wrong view, conceit and etc. similar to the watchfulness of a doorkeeper who maintains constant vigil over the gate and does not allow any unwanted person to enter the building. The deep reflection helps promote compassionate and harmonious attitude of man, and may act as a great tool to resolve the problems if occur or has occurred. Actually, it enable us to see things in right perspective and noting down the negative aspects which causes conflict and violence.
8. Right Concentration (*Sammā samādhi*): It refers to the one-

pointedness of wholesome mind (*Visuddhimagga*. 3.38, VRI. 1.83). This state of mind is attained by developing the factors (of *jhāna* i.e., absorption) of reasoning (*vitakka*), reflection (*vicāra*), joy (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) that cast away the desire of sensual pleasure (*kāma-chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*), flurry and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and perplexity (*vicikicchā*), the five obstacles hindering the path to attain wisdom. The mind, having shunned all evil thoughts and desires, ceases to be distracted and becomes tranquil; evil thoughts are replaced by a love, compassion, appreciative joy, truth and righteousness. In fact, a concentrated attitude is essential requirement for doing the good and avoiding the bad. . So, the right concentration must be oriented towards the execution of work that ensures the welfare of human beings in all respect, not intended to towards the attainment of one's vested interest. One should develop the practice of self-introspection i.e. focusing and delineating the factors that leads to the development of altruistic attitude of mind.

It is notable that the Buddha prescribed this path 2600 years ago to get rid of suffering and realize the state of no suffering. The proper practice of it enables one to uproot not only the individual suffering but also helpful in establishing peace in the world. The understanding of Four Noble Truth is essential for the clear comprehension of suffering, an individual as well as world faces. If there is suffering, it does not happen without any cause. Hence, once the reason of suffering is known, its eradication is possible, and its eradication is possible by following the aforesaid path, as prescribed by the Buddha. This reflects that one of the problems being faced by the human being is the problem of conflict and violence, caused by delusion, greed and hatred, the eradication of which by treading on the Middle path has potency to create an environment for sustainable world peace. Its practice ensures inner purification at individual level without which man is vulnerable to outer stimuli and liable to fall in the trap of conflict and violence. Hence, inner purification in respect of nonviolence is considered a prerequisite to peace workers and educators. Without this "internal disarmament" (as The Dalai

Lama called it; see Hopkins, 2000: 194), our negative emotions, derived from the ignorance to the true operating principle behind all phenomena (including our own feelings and thoughts), the fear, anger and confusion in the state of mind, would rise as reactions to the adversary conditions, and would prevent us from acting non-violently and living harmoniously with other people in the world. However, this requires the collective effort of every human being and, therefore, the initiative should be taken by leading authorities like government, policymakers, academicians, and others to follow the aforesaid principles of Buddhism. This does not mean that an individual has insignificant role in peace-building. Underlining the individual role relating to the impact of individual practice to the whole picture, the Venerable Shih Sheng-yen (1999: 175) stresses the influence of few on many, in that “peace in society begins with peace within oneself”, since the widening circle of influence of each individual would expand from their immediate sphere gradually to the larger contexts (Yeh).

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, as evident from the aforesaid description of the Middle Path, it may be stated that this path, indeed, has the potential of not only helping us in accomplishing inner purification but also in deepening the relation of our self, with others and our surroundings especially in the areas of equality, social justice, employment, privacy, and trust, which the world lacks today. Since the Middle Path almost covers other principles of Buddhism such as Five Precepts, the minimum set of rules to be followed by the people to enjoy peace and happiness, *Brahmavihāra* and etc., they are not being discussed separately. This path, in fact, represents the combination of altruistic attitude, wisdom and deep reflection. Keeping the aforesaid aspects of Buddhism the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh (1999: 159) encourages people to prepare themselves in advance by developing awareness and mindfulness for practicing peace, that is, reacting “calmly and intelligently, in the most nonviolent way possible (in accordance with the fundamental principles of Buddhism).”

Bhavatu sabba Mangala



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