



UNITED NATION DAY OF VESAK 2025



CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Volume 1



Editors **THICH DUC THIEN**
THICH NHAT TU



HONG ĐỨC PUBLISHING HOUSE

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FOREWORD

His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn

Chairman of the Executive Council, Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

The anthology “*Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development*” is a significant academic research project, marking a new step in the application of Buddhist teachings to address contemporary global issues.

This book is the result of the United Nations Vesak International Conference 2025, held at the Vietnam Buddhist Academy in Ho Chi Minh City from May 6-8, 2025—an event of special significance as it coincides with the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) and the 50th anniversary of national unification.

With 75 selected articles from over 600 English-language submissions, the book reflects five key themes: (1) *Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace*, (2) *Forgiveness and Mindful Healing: A Path to Reconciliation*, (3) *Buddhist Compassion in Action: Shared Responsibility for Human Development*, (4) *Mindfulness in Education for a Compassionate and Sustainable Future*, (5) *Fostering Unity: Collaborative Efforts for Global Harmony*.

This work not only demonstrates the strategic vision of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in organizing the 2025 United Nations Vesak Celebration but also affirms the important role of Vietnamese Buddhism on the global stage. The Editorial Board, led by Venerable Thích Đức Thiện and Venerable Thích Nhật Từ, has worked with great responsibility, selecting and editing high-quality contributions from esteemed scholars from many countries.

A notable feature of this anthology is its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to research. The authors have employed multi-dimensional methodologies, combining studies of Buddhist scriptures with fields such as psychology, education, sociology, and environmental studies to provide profound analyses and practical solutions to global challenges like climate change, social inequality, and cultural conflicts.

The core value of the anthology lies in its application of Buddhist wisdom to address contemporary challenges through key concepts: impermanence (*anicca* in Pāli), interdependence (*pratītyasamutpāda* in Sanskrit), and

compassion (*karuṇā* in Pāli). The research demonstrates that Buddhist thought not only holds spiritual value but also has high applicability in building peace, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing human dignity.

In particular, the anthology opens up several new directions for academic research: (i) Applying mindfulness in modern education, (ii) Developing eco-friendly “ecological temple” models, (iii) Organizing Buddhist events according to ESG standards (Environment, Social, and Governance), (iv) Preserving Buddhist cultural heritage in the context of globalization, (v) Promoting interfaith dialogue for world peace.

With its significant academic and practical contributions, this anthology will serve as a valuable reference for researchers, scholars, monks, nuns, Buddhists, and anyone interested in applying Buddhist philosophy to address contemporary global issues. The work also helps affirm the position of Vietnamese Buddhism in the international community while laying the foundation for more in-depth research in the future.

Overall, this is an academic work of great value both in theory and practice, reflecting a harmonious combination of tradition and modernity, ancient wisdom and contemporary needs, making an important contribution to building a more peaceful, sustainable, and humane world.

FOREWORD

Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Brahmmapundit

President of the International Council for the Day of Vesak (ICDV)

The United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV), initiated by Thailand and embraced by the global Buddhist community, stands as a profound response to the United Nations Secretary-General's call to commemorate Vesak Day worldwide. This occasion marks the sacred triple events of the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment, and Mahāparinibbāna—not merely as a global cultural festival, but as a sacred duty of the international Buddhist community to advance peace, compassion, and wisdom in alignment with the noble objectives of the United Nations. As Buddhists, we share a collective responsibility to bring the teachings of the Buddha to bear upon the urgent challenges of our time, from social injustice to climate change.

Thailand, with the gracious support of the Thai Monarchy and the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand, has played a important role in this sacred mission. Spearheaded by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and supported by the Royal Thai Government, we established the *International Council for the Day of Vesak (ICDV)* in 2004. This laid the foundation for the inaugural United Nations Day of Vesak in the same year, uniting global Buddhist leaders in vital forums to explore Buddhist principles as solutions to global issues—resonating with the vision and mandate of the United Nations.

Over the course of twenty UNDV celebrations, Thailand has had the honor of hosting fifteen, Sri Lanka one, and Vietnam has proudly hosted four—namely in 2008, 2014, 2019, and 2025. Each of Vietnam's contributions to UNDV has been remarkably successful, exemplifying visionary Buddhist leadership and international solidarity. The Government of Vietnam and the leadership of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha have demonstrated unwavering commitment and dedication in organizing these momentous events, showcasing the power of Buddhist unity and collective action for global peace.

The main theme of UNDV 2025, ***“Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development,”*** reflects the vision of the United Nations and the aspirations of the Government of Vietnam for peace and sustainability in the spirit of the Buddha's teachings. It also honors the Buddha's immense contributions to human history, while commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the Socialist Republic

of Vietnam and the 50th Anniversary of the country's reunification.

I deeply appreciate and hold in high regard the organizational capabilities, vision, and tremendous devotion demonstrated by the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in hosting the four UNDV celebrations. These efforts stand as a testament to the highest standards of Buddhist leadership and an enduring commitment to peace and sustainable development.

From over 600 submissions received for the English academic conference, 75 papers have been meticulously selected for publication in this anthology. These contributions, authored by esteemed scholars and practitioners from diverse backgrounds, reflect the depth and breadth of contemporary Buddhist scholarship. Each article not only aligns with one or more of the five sub-themes but also offers innovative insights and practical solutions to pressing global issues. For instance, some papers explore the integration of mindfulness into modern education systems, while others analyze the role of Buddhist ethics in promoting sustainable development goals (SDGs). Collectively, these works exemplify the dynamic interplay between ancient Buddhist wisdom and cutting-edge research methodologies, bridging theory and practice in meaningful ways.

As we approach UNDV 2025, I warmly welcome the expected participation of approximately 600 international scholars in the English academic conference and around 350 scholars in the Vietnamese conference from 80 countries and 5 territories. Furthermore, I commend the cultural dimensions of Vesak 2025, including the Buddhist Art Exhibition, the Vietnamese Buddhist Cultural Festival, and the international Buddhist cultural performances from India, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

These scholarly, cultural, and spiritual perspectives collectively contribute to the profound success of this sacred Vesak celebration. Together, let us ensure that the 20th United Nations Day of Vesak in Vietnam becomes a beacon of peace, unity, and sustainable development for the entire world.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

I. BACKGROUND

The present volume, “Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development”, constitutes a pivotal contribution to the 20th United Nations Day of Vesak 2025, hosted by the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City from May 6 to 8. This publication is one of five thematic volumes prepared for the International Buddhist Conference under the overarching theme “Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development.” The five themes of the conference are carefully curated to reflect the most pressing global issues through the lens of Buddhist ethical and philosophical wisdom: (1) Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace, (2) Forgiveness and Mindful Healing: A Path to Reconciliation, (3) Buddhist Compassion in Action: Shared Responsibility for Human Development, (4) Mindfulness in Education for a Compassionate and Sustainable Future, and (5) Fostering Unity: Collaborative Efforts for Global Harmony.

This volume comprises 75 selected papers presented at the Vesak conference, drawn from a remarkable pool of over 600 scholarly submissions representing 80 countries and 5 territories. The remaining research papers have been compiled and published in five additional thematic volumes, corresponding to each of the five sub-themes of the Vesak 2025 academic agenda. This collection, therefore, reflects both the intellectual diversity and the global reach of contemporary Buddhist scholarship engaged in pressing global discourses.

In light of the challenges facing humanity today—ranging from armed conflicts and ecological collapse to social polarization and spiritual disillusionment—this volume takes on critical significance. It offers Buddhist perspectives that aim to transcend dichotomies, foster reconciliation, and nurture global solidarity. At a time when the world community is striving to realize the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goals 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), this collection of scholarly essays contributes to global discourse by providing contemplative insights rooted in Dhamma and engaged in the present realities of human suffering.

Vietnam’s hosting of this landmark event coincides with three deeply symbolic national milestones: the 80th anniversary of the founding of the

Socialist Republic of Vietnam (1945–2025), the 50th anniversary of national reunification (1975–2025), and the fourth occasion on which the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha has been entrusted with organizing the UN Day of Vesak. In this context, the theme of “unity and inclusivity” not only resonates with Buddhist ethical imperatives but also aligns with Vietnam’s national ethos of resilience, peace-building, and collective progress. Through philosophical inquiry and interdisciplinary collaboration, the essays in this volume exemplify how Buddhist teachings offer both critical reflection and pragmatic pathways for addressing structural injustice and cultivating a world order based on mutual respect and shared dignity.

The academic rigor, cultural sensitivity, and spiritual depth of the essays compiled herein reflect the tireless efforts of Buddhist scholars and practitioners across continents. Drawing upon canonical texts, historical experiences, and contemporary applications, these contributions bridge the spiritual and the secular, the local and the global. They demonstrate that Buddhism is not merely a path of personal liberation, but a living tradition capable of informing public policy, educational reform, environmental ethics, and peace diplomacy.

II. OVERVIEW OF SELECTED RESEARCH PAPERS

2.1. Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace

In their empirical study, “*Mindfulness-Based Learning (MBL) Process*,” Hansa Dhammahaso and Nadnapang Phophichit examine the physiological and psychological effects of a structured doctoral curriculum grounded in Buddhist mindfulness. Focusing on PhD students enrolled in the Innovative Mindfulness and Peace Studies Program at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the authors employ a pretest-posttest design to measure stress levels, cardiovascular indicators, and brainwave activity across two academic terms. Findings highlight significant reductions in diastolic blood pressure and perceived stress, alongside modest gains in hydration and heart rate regulation. While EEG and cortisol shifts were statistically insignificant, the study suggests that the MBL framework enhances well-being in rigorous academic environments. With its integration of scientific analysis and Buddhist-informed pedagogy, the paper affirms mindfulness as both a contemplative and transformative educational tool. Though limited by sample size and lack of a control group, the study provides a valuable foundation for future mindfulness-based research in higher education.

Ven. Dr. Thich Duc Tuan explores in his paper “*Cultivating Inner Peace for Global Harmony: A Buddhist Perspective on Mindfulness, Vipassanā, and Ethical Living*” how meditative insight (*Vipassanā*) coupled with ethical integrity fosters not only personal serenity but global cooperation. The paper highlights how Buddhist practices such as right mindfulness and right livelihood lead to ecological awareness and intercultural empathy. Tuan’s use of case reflections on peace education and social ethics adds grounding to his doctrinal exposition. He proposes mindfulness as a skill for decision-makers, teachers, and activists alike. One of the paper’s strengths is its clear linkage

between personal practice and structural transformation. Its limitation lies in underdeveloped engagement with interreligious dialogue. Overall, the work provides an integrated view of how peace-building must include daily ethical conduct rooted in clarity, concentration, and compassion.

Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Gallele Sumanasiri Thero, in his paper *"Faith and Tolerance, Peace within and Peace Without,"* investigates how interreligious understanding and internal transformation form the basis for sustainable peace. Drawing on Buddhist principles and cross-religious insights, he emphasizes that true harmony must begin with individual moral purification. The paper skillfully bridges doctrinal exposition with socio-political critique, highlighting the role of psychological roots - desire, hatred, and delusion - in fueling violence. By contrasting theistic and nontheistic frameworks, Sumanasiri advocates a pluralistic ethics grounded in mutual respect. A notable strength is his integration of Buddhist texts like the Aggañña and Vasettha Suttas to support the universality of equality and nonviolence. Yet, more empirical data on modern conflict resolution could strengthen his case. Ultimately, the work proposes that outer peace can only arise from inner clarity, compassion, and detachment from ego-bound views.

Prof. Dr. Tabona Shoko, in his study *"Buddhism and Cultivation of Inner Peace for World Peace: The Case of Zimbabwe,"* examines how the Buddhist pursuit of inner peace can serve as a foundation for global harmony and sustainable development. Framed within the context of Vesak 2025, the paper underscores unity and inclusivity as essential Buddhist insights for world peace. Drawing from both textual analysis and fieldwork in Zimbabwe, Shoko contextualizes Tibetan Buddhism's role in peacebuilding and social welfare. The study highlights practices such as mindfulness, compassion, and meditation as transformative tools for addressing violence, inequality, and ecological crises. A particular strength lies in his integration of Buddhist thought with Sustainable Development Goals. However, the discussion would benefit from a more critical engagement with contemporary African spiritual pluralism. Ultimately, the work affirms that inner transformation is indispensable to achieving external peace and global cooperation.

Dr. YoungHoon Kwaak, in *"Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity,"* presents the Lumbini Peace and Harmony District (P.H.D.) as a visionary response to global crises through Buddhist principles. Challenging materialism and nationalism, he proposes a shift from external to internal transformation, grounded in sudden enlightenment and gradual cultivation. The Peace City design incorporates Buddhist symbolism with sustainable development, aiming to protect cultural heritage while fostering ecological balance and social inclusion. Drawing from decades of planning and international cooperation, the paper moves beyond theory to offer a concrete model of mindful urbanism. Its strength lies in integrating spiritual ideals with practical governance. However, its realization remains hindered by political inertia. Ultimately, Kwaak's work calls for collective Buddhist action to manifest a living city of compassion, learning, and peace at the Buddha's birthplace.

“A Novel Approach to Emotions to Cultivate Inner Peace for World Peace: A Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions?” by Ven. Prof. Dr. Mahinda Deegalle Mahinda Deegalle presents an innovative dialogue between Buddhist moral psychology and contemporary emotion theory, arguing that unwholesome emotions like anger and pride are not merely reactions but karmically charged mental states with social consequences. He classifies Buddhist responses to emotion – such as patience, mindfulness, and compassion – as tools for emotional governance in pluralistic societies. The essay bridges Pāli textual traditions with Western psychology, suggesting a cross-disciplinary roadmap for peace education. Its key strength is the integration of Buddhist emotional training as a secular method for conflict resolution. The scope, however, remains largely theoretical, lacking empirical validation or fieldwork data. Nevertheless, this study adds nuance to Buddhist engagement with modern psychology and reaffirms emotional literacy as a path to inner and outer peace.

“Principles of Peace in The Lotus Sutra” by Most Ven. Dr. Thich Tam Thien, offers a profound reinterpretation of Chapter 28 of the Lotus Sūtra, extracting four core principles – seeking the protection of the Buddhas, planting virtuous roots, abiding in right concentration, and generating great compassion – as a structured ethical and spiritual path toward inner and global peace. He argues that cultivating faith, morality, meditation, and altruism can dissolve egocentric tendencies and cultivate social harmony. The paper positions Mahāyāna ideals as tools not only for liberation but for peacemaking, especially in times of division. His metaphor of “lotus in the mud” vividly illustrates transcendence through engagement. While spiritually rich, the essay presumes a level of doctrinal familiarity that may limit its accessibility to non-Buddhist audiences. Nevertheless, this work stands as a powerful appeal to reframe Buddhist spirituality as a foundation for ethical citizenship and sustainable peace.

“Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace: A Buddhist Perspective with Special Reference to Nepal”, Ashok Nanda Bajracharya explores how cultivating inner peace through Buddhist teachings can lay the foundation for sustainable world peace, with Nepal as a spiritual exemplar. Emphasizing that suffering arises from greed, hatred, and delusion, the paper outlines how mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct dismantle these roots. Drawing on core Buddhist doctrines – such as dependent origination and the Noble Eightfold Path – it demonstrates that peace is both personal and systemic. Through Nepal’s unique role as the Buddha’s birthplace and its post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, Bajracharya illustrates how inner transformation translates into national and global reconciliation. The paper’s integration of meditative insight with policy-level engagement makes it a compelling call for peace rooted in wisdom and compassion. While rich in philosophical depth, a greater empirical focus could enhance its practical applicability. Overall, the work affirms that fostering inner harmony is essential to achieving inclusive and enduring global peace.

Dr. Neeraj Yadav’s paper examines the Buddhist concept of mettā - loving-kindness - as a transformative path to inner peace and global harmony. Drawing from canonical texts, psychology, and case studies, it presents mettā not just

as a virtue but as a pragmatic approach to conflict resolution, social justice, and environmental care. By exploring Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, Yadav highlights its universal relevance and flexibility. The paper shows how cultivating loving-kindness fosters empathy, reduces hostility, and builds cooperative communities, advocating its integration into education, diplomacy, and grassroots programs. Though the study could benefit from deeper interreligious dialogue, it powerfully envisions peace rooted in compassion and mindfulness, urging a shift from division to dialogue, from self-centeredness to global solidarity.

Ven. Tshibanda Gotama Sidarta, in his article “*Buddhist Meditation, A Right Way To Inner Peace For World Peace*” offers a pragmatic Buddhist framework for peace-building rooted in moral discipline and meditative cultivation. Emphasizing that global peace begins with the purification of the mind, the paper advocates observing the Five Precepts and practicing samatha-vipassana meditation. Drawing from canonical sources, it demonstrates how right morality and right concentration can transform defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion into serenity and insight. The Four Brahmaviharas are highlighted as both ethical ideals and meditative tools. The work also underscores the foundational role of mindfulness in achieving personal liberation and social harmony. While grounded in Theravada orthodoxy, the paper affirms the universal relevance of cultivating a peaceful mind as the basis for a peaceful world.

In this richly textual work, “*War and Peace: A Comprehensive Exploration from the Buddhist Perspective*”, Ven. Prof. Witharandeniye Chandasiri contrasts Buddhist nonviolence with the global culture of militarism. He revisits early discourses to demonstrate how the roots of war – greed, hatred, and delusion – are treated in Buddhist soteriology as psychological poisons. The essay argues that true peace arises not from treaties or armaments, but from uprooting defilements through spiritual cultivation. He presents peace as an ontological and moral achievement rather than a diplomatic outcome. The paper’s strength lies in its textual fidelity and ethical clarity. However, it stops short of engaging with modern case studies or applying the teachings to state-level conflict resolution. Still, it stands as a rigorous doctrinal reminder that Buddhism’s response to war is introspective transformation, not retaliation.

“*The Interconnection between Inner and Outer Peace: A Buddhist Perspective*” by Ricardo Sasaki investigates the dialectical relationship between inner calm and social peace, proposing that the two are not sequential but mutually reinforcing. Drawing from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and the ethics of mettā, he outlines a model in which meditative awareness fosters not only emotional stability but a shift in relational patterns. He supports his argument with references to modern conflict studies and contemplative science. Sasaki’s writing is lucid, bridging doctrinal precision with lived experience. One limitation is that the practical steps for scaling individual transformation into community action remain underdeveloped. Still, his argument is impactful: there is no peaceful society without peaceful people – and no inner peace that remains ethically passive.

Dr. Phe Xuan Bach's paper, "*A Perspective on Buddhist Non-Duality: A Potential Path for Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace*," offers an insightful exploration of how the Buddhist principle of non-duality (advaya) forms the foundation for both inner tranquility and global harmony. Drawing upon Mahāyāna teachings, particularly the Vimalakīrti Sūtra and Thich Nhat Hanh's engaged Buddhism, the author presents mindfulness as the bridge between self and society. Through the "O Path," Bach proposes a cyclical process of healing, transformation, and peace-building grounded in compassion, inter-being, and shared humanity. The paper integrates psychological research, Buddhist doctrine, and personal reflection, offering a holistic approach to peace that transcends dualistic thinking. While its tone is contemplative, the work delivers a clear and practical framework for embodying peace from the inside out – urging us to live not on the world, but in the world.

Prof. Dr. Lye Ket Yong's paper, "*World Peace through Inner Peace: The Transformative Power of Meditation*," presents a compelling case for meditation as the foundation of sustainable peace in both personal and global dimensions. Drawing upon Buddhist scriptures and contemporary scientific research, the work underscores how meditation cultivates mindfulness, emotional resilience, and moral clarity. The author skillfully weaves together traditional techniques – Vipassanā and Dhammakaya – with reflections on mental purification, ethical development, and the transformative impact of meditative insight. Through detailed discussion of the "Middle Way," the paper reaffirms that inner calm is not only a psychological goal, but a spiritual necessity for social harmony and sustainable development. While rooted in Theravāda and Thai meditative traditions, its universal relevance is amplified by real-world initiatives, including peace-building programs and global meditation campaigns. Ultimately, the paper reaffirms that peace in the world begins with the stillness of one's mind.

Bhikkhu Brahmāli's study, *Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace: What the Buddha Says about Peace According to the Pāli Canon*, offers a doctrinally precise analysis of the Pāli Canon's teachings on peace, emphasizing practical teachings from the Dhammapada, Sutta Nipāta, and Anguttara Nikāya. He argues that peace arises from ethical restraint (*sīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), not external control. The work highlights the Buddha's rejection of vengeance and war, positioning forgiveness and understanding as political tools. One of the essay's contributions is its textual rigor combined with real-world application. A minor drawback is limited attention to current geopolitical contexts. Nevertheless, Brahmāli's classical rigor affirms the Pāli Canon's relevance in modern peacebuilding without resorting to doctrinal simplification.

2.2. Forgiveness and Mindful Healing: A Path to Reconciliation

Ven. Dr. Rathmale Punnarathana's article "*An Exploration of Buddhist Principles on Conflict Resolution and Peace-building as Presented in the Pāli Discourses*" offers a profound inquiry into how Buddhist teachings address the roots of conflict – craving, hatred, and ignorance – through inner

transformation. Drawing from discourses such as the Mahanidana-sutta and the Four Noble Truths, the paper emphasizes the essential role of moral, mental, and cognitive cultivation in resolving both personal and societal discord. It notably broadens the scope of Buddhist peace-building to include socio-economic injustices like poverty and inequality. The analysis shows how inner peace, nurtured through loving-kindness and mindfulness, becomes foundational to sustainable social harmony. While doctrinally thorough, the paper would benefit from broader interreligious and intercultural dialogue on conflict transformation. Nonetheless, it presents a compelling model of ethical and spiritual engagement with contemporary global crises.

“Abandoning Anger for Peace: Analysis of the Three Stages of Anger and Methods to Deal with Them” by Bhikkhu Dr. Sobhana Mahatthero, PhD dissects the progression of anger into distinct phases and proposes targeted interventions rooted in Buddhist practice. His analysis clarifies how transforming anger can lead to inner peace. The work provides a detailed conceptual framework that bridges ancient teachings with modern psychology. It contributes to understanding emotional regulation from a spiritual perspective, yet the subjective interpretation of emotional stages and the lack of extensive quantitative measures present clear limitations.

“Love Conquers the World not Arms” by Dr. Labh Niharika explores the Buddhist concept of ‘mettā’ (Pāli) or ‘maitrī’ (Sanskrit), highlighting it as unconditional and selfless love that transcends attachment. Rooted in core Buddhist texts, mettā is shown as both personal and political, promoting harmony from families to global relations.

Ven. Dr. Tan Kah Poh in the article *“A Synergistic Model for Psychological Crisis Management and Healing in Buddhist Contemplative Care and Chaplaincy”* indicates that Buddhist chaplaincy is a relatively recent profession offering spiritual care rooted in Dharma. It supports individuals through crises, particularly illness and death, by applying key Buddhist practices and compassionate presence.

Sunil Kamble’s *“Buddhist Insight for Peace Through Social Conflict Resolution – A Historical Application by Dr. Ambedkar in India”* offers a historical analysis that interweaves Buddhist philosophy with social conflict resolution strategies. His narrative brings forward historical case studies that exemplify how traditional insights can resolve contemporary disputes. The paper is rich in contextual analysis and reinterprets classical teachings for modern applications. However, its reliance on qualitative historical data and the absence of recent empirical evidence present certain limitations. Ultimately, the research provides a thoughtful reinterpretation that could inspire new conflict resolution frameworks.

In *“Liberation by ‘Sublime Dwelling’ (Brahmavihāra): The Way to Inner and External Peace,”* Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Diệu Hiếu explores the transformative potential of the four Brahmavihāras – loving-kindness, compassion, unselfish delight, and equanimity – as both a path to inner liberation and a foundation for social harmony. Drawing upon Pali texts and Buddhist commentarial

traditions, the paper demonstrates how cultivating these states systematically purifies the mind, counteracts hatred, and fosters serenity. Moreover, the study highlights how mental peace, once internalized, naturally extends into ethical conduct, promoting interpersonal goodwill and collective concord. Through doctrinal analysis and practical insight, Dr. Hiếu affirms that true peace begins within but radiates outward, making the Sublime Dwelling a viable framework for both individual transformation and peaceful coexistence.

In the article “*The Power of Forgiveness: Pathway to Inner Growth and Renewal*” Professor Dr. Jyoti Gaur presents a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of forgiveness as a transformative psychological and spiritual practice. Drawing upon diverse traditions including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, and Indigenous spirituality, the paper underscores forgiveness as vital to emotional healing, mental well-being, and spiritual development. Distinguishing forgiveness from reconciliation, condoning, and forgetting, Dr. Gaur addresses the psychological and social barriers that hinder the process. Utilizing evidence-based methods such as mindfulness, cognitive reframing, and self-compassion, the study highlights how forgiveness cultivates resilience, empathy, and holistic health. Ultimately, the work frames forgiveness not merely as a moral virtue but as a skillful means for personal liberation, emotional renewal, and harmonious living.

Prof. Dr. Abraham Vélez de Cea, in “*A Buddhist Philosophy of Forgiveness*,” delves deeply into the conceptual realm of forgiveness as envisioned in Buddhist thought. His rigorous exegesis provides a robust theoretical framework that links spiritual forgiveness with practical reconciliation methods. The study is notable for its detailed philosophical analysis and its implications for conflict resolution. However, the dense theoretical language and minimal empirical evidence may challenge some readers. Despite these limitations, the work remains a profound contribution to the academic exploration of forgiveness.

In “*Ahimsā: A Buddhist Response to Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)*,” Elias G. Konyana investigates how Buddhist non-violence can counter domestic abuse. He argues that ancient ethical precepts offer practical solutions for modern conflicts, emphasizing compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The paper demonstrates innovative thinking by linking spirituality with social justice. It provides clear frameworks for applying Buddhist values to interpersonal violence. However, its reliance on qualitative insights and limited cross-cultural analysis may restrict its universal applicability.

Ven. Dr. Sumedh Thero introduces in the article “*Dynamics in Forgiveness and Mindful Healing on the path of dhamma*” The Path to Reconciliation is a journey to establish respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It means recognizing past injustices and building a just, equal society rooted in mutual respect. Reconciliation is founded on respect for Indigenous nations and Indigenous peoples. Respect grows through understanding their history and valuing their languages, cultures, and legal traditions.

Dr. Lauw Acep’s treatise *Forgiveness and Mindful Healing: A Buddhist Perspective* presents forgiveness not merely as a moral virtue but as a

transformative force for psychological healing and spiritual liberation. Drawing from canonical Pāli texts and contemporary insights, the work portrays forgiveness (khama) as inherently connected to virtue, compassion, and wisdom. Dr. Acep demonstrates how mindfulness transforms the forgiveness process through letting go, emotional regulation, and self-transcendence, leading to mental well-being and social harmony. The study integrates classical teachings such as the five spiritual faculties, the Brahmavihāras, and satipatthāna with modern meditative and therapeutic methods. Through careful analysis, it affirms that Buddhist forgiveness is not passive absolution but an intentional path of transformation grounded in awareness and loving-kindness.

Ven. Dr. Bhikkhuni Lieu Phap's essay, "*The Contributions of Vietnamese Bhikkhuni Sangha to the Sustainable Development of the Country*," offers a comprehensive exploration of how Vietnamese Buddhist nuns integrate spiritual practice with social responsibility to foster national well-being. Through initiatives in education, healthcare, charity, and Dhamma propagation, the Bhikkhuni Sangha embodies the compassionate ethos of engaged Buddhism. The work highlights the transformative impact of nuns in fields ranging from orphan care and elder support to environmental awareness, psychological counseling, and interfaith dialogue. Dr. Lieu Phap articulates how the Sangha's leadership – rooted in wisdom, mindfulness, and compassion – contributes meaningfully to sustainable development while preserving cultural and spiritual continuity. This study affirms that Vietnamese nuns are not only custodians of the Dharma but also vital agents of ethical and inclusive progress in contemporary society.

Dr. Wimal Hewamanage, in "*Buddhist Reflection on Forgiveness and Its Relevance to Patience and Loving-Kindness*," offers a reflective discourse that connects classical Buddhist teachings with modern ethical practices. The research articulates how forgiveness, patience, and loving-kindness can enhance interpersonal relationships and societal well-being. It is celebrated for its clear exegesis and thoughtful synthesis of traditional and contemporary viewpoints. Nonetheless, the study's narrow cultural focus and limited cross-comparative data pose notable constraints. Despite these issues, the paper contributes meaningfully to discussions on ethical living and psychological health.

Dr. Arvind Kumar Singh's scholarly contribution, "*Compassion and Tolerance: Not Weakness, But Strength for Human Development*," presents a compelling argument for reinterpreting compassion (*karuṇā*) and tolerance (*khantī*) as transformative forces in both spiritual and societal contexts. Drawing from Theravāda and Mahāyāna texts, as well as historical and contemporary examples, the paper asserts that these virtues are not passive traits but dynamic expressions of emotional intelligence, ethical resilience, and spiritual maturity. Singh examines how *karuṇā* and *khantī* are essential for personal liberation, conflict resolution, social justice, and sustainable development. The work stands out for its integrative approach, linking Buddhist ethics with modern psychological well-being, interreligious harmony, and global responsibility. This interdisciplinary perspective

underscores compassion and tolerance as indispensable virtues for building a more peaceful, empathetic, and sustainable world.

2.3. Buddhist Compassion in Action: Shared Responsibility for Human Development

“Sharing – Not Saving: Empathy and Interconnectedness as Patterns of Contemporary Fundraising Success” by Dr. Jitka Cirklová investigates contemporary fundraising models that prioritize sharing and empathy over traditional saving approaches, drawing inspiration from Buddhist principles of interconnectedness. The paper identifies innovative strategies where donor engagement is reshaped by practices of mutual support and ethical responsibility, leading to more effective and sustainable philanthropic outcomes. It explores how empathetic communication, community solidarity, and ethical fundraising practices can transform financial support mechanisms in modern charitable initiatives. While the study offers a novel conceptual framework and insightful analysis, it is somewhat limited by the lack of extensive quantitative data and cross-context comparisons, which could enhance its empirical foundation. Cirklová’s work presents a promising model that merges spiritual ethics with modern fundraising, yet further research is required to assess its scalability and effectiveness in diverse socio-economic environments. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how values-driven approaches can redefine success in contemporary philanthropy.

Dr. Baatr U. Kitinov, in his article *Buddhist Compassion in Action: Politics and Buddhism in 1720–1730s In and Around Tibet*, explores how Buddhist principles - especially compassion and moral responsibility - influenced political decisions and interethnic relations during a turbulent period in Tibetan history. Drawing from both well-known and rare archival sources, the study examines how key figures such as the Seventh Dalai Lama, Dzungar rulers, Qing emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng, and Kalmyk leaders Ayuka and Tseren Donduk applied Buddhist ethics in resolving conflicts. The article highlights how doctrines of mercy, when embodied in political practice, enabled ceasefires, diplomacy, and religious cooperation across cultural and imperial boundaries. Its strength lies in detailed textual analysis and underutilized Tibetan and Russian archives. Although the focus remains within a Buddhist framework, Kitinov’s work powerfully illustrates how Buddhist compassion functioned as an active force in diplomacy and governance.

Dr. Henry Dang, in his compelling paper *“The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): What the Buddhist Community can do”*, investigates the profound alignment between Buddhist principles and the global development agenda established by the United Nations. The paper outlines how Buddhist teachings—rooted in compassion, mindfulness, and the Noble Eightfold Path—offer invaluable ethical frameworks for advancing the 17 SDGs. Emphasizing peace education, ecological stewardship, and moral economic conduct, Dr. Dang proposes actionable initiatives such as Earth Care Day, Dhamma-based business networks, and the institutional involvement of Buddhists in national and international SDG processes. A

salient contribution of the work lies in its integration of timeless spiritual wisdom with contemporary global governance challenges. However, the article primarily focuses on Buddhist contributions without an in-depth comparative religious dialogue. Nonetheless, it provides a timely and practical call for the global Buddhist community to engage actively in shaping a future of sustainable peace and human dignity.

Dr. Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury's paper "*Through Promoting Engaged Buddhism: An Altruistic Role of Karmayōgī Kṛpāśaraṇa Mahāthērō (1865 - 1926) in Pre-Partition Bengal*" investigates the influential role of Karmayōgī Kṛpāśaraṇa Mahāthērō in promoting engaged Buddhism during pre-partition Bengal. The study traces the altruistic endeavors of this eminent figure, detailing how his commitment to compassion and social reform catalyzed community empowerment and ethical activism. It discusses the application of Buddhist precepts in addressing social inequalities and fostering educational and welfare initiatives. Critical points include the interplay between spiritual leadership and public sentiment, the transformative potential of engaged Buddhism, and the historical context that shaped his impactful contributions. Despite its rich historical analysis and theoretical depth, the research relies heavily on archival material and traditional narratives, which may limit its contemporary applicability. The paper makes a significant contribution by illuminating the historical roots of socially engaged Buddhism and calls for further interdisciplinary research to explore how these altruistic practices can be adapted to current social challenges.

Dr. Efendi Hansen Ng, in his paper *Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development*, offers a thoughtful reflection on the transformative power of Buddhist values in addressing today's global challenges. Aligned with the 2025 United Nations Day of Vesak theme, the paper explores how principles such as interconnectedness, compassion, and inclusivity - grounded in dependent origination and the Four Brahmaviharas - can shape ethical approaches to peacebuilding and sustainable development. Drawing from classical sources and lived practices in contemporary Indonesia, Ng demonstrates the relevance of Buddhist ethics to issues from ecological protection to social justice. A key strength lies in its detailed account of compassion in action through education, interfaith initiatives, and engaged Buddhism. While rooted in the Buddhist tradition, the work meaningfully contributes to global ethical discourse by showing how spiritual wisdom can serve as a moral compass for collective well-being and planetary care.

In his paper, Rev. Fuminobu Komura offers a compelling account of Buddhist chaplaincy as holistic spiritual care grounded in the principles of loving-kindness, compassion, and wisdom. Through the development of the Care of Inochi model at the Rinbutsuken Institute for Engaged Buddhism in Tokyo, the study illustrates how Buddhist chaplains provide interfaith, patient-centered support within medical institutions such as The Jikei University Hospital. By integrating doctrinal foundations - especially dependent co-arising

and the Four Actions of the Bodhisattva - with presence and practical skill, the model affirms spiritual care as a mutual path of healing and transformation. A key strength lies in its emphasis that chaplaincy is not merely a service to others but a reflective and transformative journey for the practitioner. While rooted in Buddhist frameworks, the work significantly contributes to interfaith dialogue and expands the contemporary discourse on spiritual care in healthcare contexts.

Prof. Manuel Antonio Ato del Avellanal Carrera's "*The Philosophy of Thai - Vietnamese Engaged Buddhism: A Convergent Ethical Framework for Mindful Civic Action*" presents a comparative analysis of Thai and Vietnamese engaged Buddhism, proposing an ethical framework for mindful civic action. The study investigates how cultural nuances and historical contexts shape the application of Buddhist principles in civic life. It highlights the convergence of traditional teachings with modern democratic practices, emphasizing community participation, ethical leadership, and social justice. Key points include the synthesis of cross-cultural spiritual practices, the promotion of inclusive governance, and the role of engaged Buddhism in mediating societal conflicts. While the research offers valuable insights into the interplay between religion and civic responsibility, it is occasionally limited by an overemphasis on theoretical constructs and lacks extensive quantitative support. Despite these challenges, the paper significantly contributes to the understanding of how engaged Buddhism can inform practical strategies for contemporary civic engagement, and it invites further studies to explore its application across diverse cultural settings.

Ven. Triratana Bhikkhu Jhubhur Chakma's study, "*Buddhist Compassion in Action: Promoting Education, Harmony and Strengthening Unity Through Buddhist Missionary Schools in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh*" explores how Buddhist missionary schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts foster educational excellence, social cohesion, and community empowerment. The paper outlines the deployment of compassionate teaching methods, the integration of ethical values derived from Buddhist traditions, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue as means to uplift marginalized groups. It highlights the schools' role in instilling moral responsibility and nurturing community solidarity while also emphasizing innovative pedagogical approaches. However, the research is limited by its qualitative focus and a scarcity of quantitative data to benchmark outcomes. Chakma's work contributes a practical model for integrating spiritual ethics into education and social reform, while suggesting that further comparative and empirical studies are necessary to establish broader applicability and impact.

Lim Kooi Fong introduces NORBU (Neural Operator for Responsible Buddhist Understanding), a pioneering Buddhist AI envisioned as a *kalyāṇa mitta* – a spiritual friend – capable of facilitating compassionate, ethical, and spiritually attuned conversations. Rooted in the principles of non-violent communication and the four *brahma-vihāras*, NORBU exemplifies how Buddhist values can inform AI development to promote mindfulness, empathy,

and well-being in digital interaction. Drawing from Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, and structured around Yogācāra frameworks such as ālaya-vijñāna and āśraya-parāvṛtti, the project blends doctrinal depth with advanced language models to deliver context-sensitive and ethically sound guidance. NORBU's thoughtful responses to sensitive user inquiries – ranging from gender ethics to grief and karma – demonstrate its role as both an epistemic tool and a companion for spiritual growth. A notable contribution of the project lies in its articulation of a new “Dharma Door” where Buddhist AI becomes a practical and transformative interface for applying timeless wisdom in today's complex digital world.

Prof. Dr. Projit Kumar Palit's comprehensive paper, *“Buddhist Compassion and Human Development,”* explores the vital intersection between Buddhist ethics and holistic human flourishing. Drawing on early Indian texts, the teachings of the Buddha, and contemporary human development theory, the author argues for an integrative model that unites material advancement with spiritual awakening. The study critiques Western paradigms of progress rooted in external growth, proposing instead a balance of physical, mental, ethical, and spiritual cultivation. With particular attention to Buddhist principles such as non-violence, mindfulness, and compassion, the paper highlights their alignment with the six pillars of human development defined by the UNDP. Through historical examples like Emperor Ashoka's Dhamma-based governance, the work affirms Buddhism's enduring relevance in fostering peace, dignity, and sustainable well-being. It offers a visionary framework that bridges ancient wisdom with modern developmental challenges.

In his paper *“Buddhism Around the World-Africa: Perspectives of African Buddhist Followers”* Rev. Dr. ILukpitiye Pannasekara Thero offers a nuanced exploration of how Buddhism is interpreted and adapted by African followers, thereby enriching the global discourse on religious diversity. The study details the unique synthesis between traditional Buddhist doctrines and indigenous African cultural practices, emphasizing the role of local contexts in shaping spiritual expression. It highlights the transformative impact of intercultural dialogue, resilience in the face of socio-economic challenges, and the evolution of compassionate practices in non-traditional settings. The research contributes valuable insights into the diffusion of Buddhist ethics beyond its classical origins while pointing out potential tensions arising from cultural differences. Although the work is commendable for its comprehensive qualitative analysis, it could benefit from more quantitative data to substantiate its claims. Overall, the study underscores the importance of cross-cultural engagement in understanding and advancing Buddhist values in a pluralistic world.

Prof. Dr. Jose Antonio Rodriguez Diaz's work *“Buddhists in New Lands: Compassion Values and Actions Towards Better and Sustainable Futures and Happiness”* investigates the dynamic reconfiguration of Buddhist compassion among diasporic communities, illustrating how traditional values are adapted to address contemporary social challenges. The paper explores the transformative impact of compassionate practices on community cohesion, sustainable

development, and personal well-being in new cultural environments. It highlights innovative approaches where Buddhist ethical principles are employed to foster mutual support, resilience, and holistic growth. The research makes significant contributions by linking classical teachings with modern experiences of migration, identity reformation, and environmental stewardship. Notwithstanding its robust theoretical insights, the study notes variability in practical application across different communities, which could benefit from further systematic empirical research. By offering a well-rounded perspective that integrates doctrinal analysis with socio-cultural dynamics, the paper enriches our understanding of how Buddhist compassion can drive progressive change and sustainable futures in diverse global settings.

Ven. Thich Thien Tri offers an in-depth examination of the reformist vision of Venerable Taixu, whose efforts to modernize Chinese Buddhism in the early twentieth century marked a pivotal turning point in the tradition's evolution. By advocating for socially engaged Buddhism, interfaith dialogue, and institutional renewal, Taixu sought to revitalize Buddhism amid cultural decline and the growing influence of Western religious models. Despite facing resistance from conservative elements within the sangha and the turbulent political context of Republican and Maoist China, his legacy endures through the work of disciples such as Yinshun and Hsing Yun. Notably, Taixu's integration of organizational models from Japanese Buddhism and his admiration for Christian social structures reflect a bold vision of religious adaptability grounded in ethical responsibility and global relevance. The work highlights both the successes and limitations of Taixu's reform movement, portraying him as a pioneer of modern Buddhist thought whose commitment to compassion and wisdom continues to inspire reform across cultures and generations.

In their collaborative paper, "*Mindful Marketing Strategies for Borobudur: A Buddhist Approach to Sustainable Tourism*", Dr. Budi Hermawan and Soegeng Wahyoedi propose a novel approach to tourism marketing by embedding Buddhist ethical values into the promotion of Borobudur. The study argues that mindful marketing- anchored in principles of non-harm, mindfulness, and cultural sensitivity enhance visitor experience while ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage. It outlines strategies such as ethical communication, responsible travel practices, and community-based tourism initiatives that align economic growth with spiritual integrity. The authors provide detailed case analyses and theoretical discussions that suggest a reformation of conventional marketing models in tourism. Although the framework is innovative, the study is limited by its dependence on qualitative insights and a scarcity of large-scale empirical data, which may restrict its broader applicability. Overall, this research offers a promising blueprint for sustainable tourism that unites ancient Buddhist values with modern marketing techniques while advocating for further quantitative studies to test its effectiveness.

Ms. Adele Tomlin's paper "*Buddhist Compassion in Action: Protecting Animals and the Environment with Our Diet*" explores the ethical dimensions of dietary choices as expressions of Buddhist compassion, particularly in

protecting animals and the environment. The study delves into how dietary practices influenced by Buddhist principles can reduce harm and promote ecological balance; it analyzes the moral implications of consumption patterns; it links ethical eating with broader social and environmental sustainability; it offers insights into how compassion can be operationalized through everyday choices; and it presents a critique of conventional consumption models. Despite its innovative perspective, the research is limited by subjective interpretations and a lack of comprehensive empirical data to measure behavioral impacts across different populations. Tomlin's work provides a fresh and practical contribution by proposing that mindful eating serves as an actionable pathway for environmental stewardship, yet it calls for additional research to quantify its effects on both animal welfare and ecological preservation robustly.

2.4. Mindfulness in Education for a Compassionate and Sustainable Future, and Sustainable Future

Dr. Lobsang Tshultrim Gnon Na's article "*Mindfulness in Education: Advancing Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity and Sustainable Future*" presents mindfulness as a pedagogical method for reducing educational exclusion and fostering mutual respect. He examines how marginalized students benefit from mindful awareness practices that affirm their identity and restore their dignity. The author situates this within a broader human rights discourse. The argument is persuasive but would benefit from field-based validation or the inclusion of institutional examples where such reforms have been trialed.

In his insightful contribution "*Mindfulness in Education for a Compassionate and Sustainable Future and Fostering Unity for Global Harmony*," Ven. Lopen Gem Dorji links the cultivation of mindful awareness with the creation of harmonious societies. He situates mindfulness as a tool for overcoming sectarianism, nationalism, and prejudice, thereby fostering global unity. Dorji uses Bhutan's Gross National Happiness framework to illustrate how mindfulness can be embedded in national education. The strength of the article is its macro-level vision connecting mindfulness to governance and development. However, its ambitious scale might benefit from localized examples of school-based implementation.

In "*Application of Mindfulness at Mahāpajāpatī Primary School Education in India*," Bhikkhuni Dr. Như Nguyệt presents a case study of how a Buddhist school integrates mindfulness practices across its academic and moral curriculum. She details specific classroom strategies including mindful sitting, ethical storytelling, and sensory awareness exercises. The research highlights improved student behavior, empathy, and attentiveness. The paper's merit lies in its concrete documentation of grassroots Buddhist education. Yet, the study would be stronger with longitudinal tracking of student outcomes and comparative evaluation with conventional primary schools.

In his expansive paper "*Empowering Students with Compassionate Action for Global Peace*," Ven. Dr. Burmansah integrates Buddhist meditation retreats with mindfulness pedagogy to develop compassionate leadership among

youth. The study investigates several school-based programs in Indonesia where contemplative practices enhance students' capacity for peacebuilding and service. Burmansah posits that experiential mindfulness – through retreats and service learning – leads to deeper personal transformation than classroom-only approaches. His work contributes to the action-based mindfulness theory, reinforcing the link between inner clarity and outer peace. A limitation lies in the relatively anecdotal presentation; quantitative data or longitudinal tracking would help substantiate the claims more robustly.

Prof. Georgia Cristian Borges, through her work *“Seeds of Consciousness: Cultivating Compassionate Education for a Sustainable Future”*, offers a poetic yet precise argument for integrating mindfulness into educational psychology. She introduces the metaphor of “seeds” to describe latent human capacities for empathy, ecological responsibility, and collective awareness. Borges draws from the Abhidhamma and contemporary developmental psychology to frame education as a process of consciousness cultivation. The originality of her language is compelling, though at times, metaphor overtakes methodological clarity. Greater empirical backing would enhance the academic weight of her propositions.

Most Ven. Prof. Dhammapāla Ila (Lee Tackhoan), in *“Sati Meditation (Mindfulness) in Education”*, highlights mindfulness as a transformative element in modern education. Rooted in Buddhist tradition, Sati meditation is shown to enhance emotional well-being, academic focus, and ethical awareness. The study presents practical examples from schools and research to illustrate its benefits while also acknowledging challenges in implementation. By linking mindfulness to sustainability and compassion, the work offers a concise yet impactful vision for holistic education.

Ven. Dr. Wistina Seneru, in *“Creating a Mindful Campus for Global Harmony: Cultivating Mindful Habits from the Classroom to Everyday Life for Students and Educators”*, examines the role of mindfulness in transforming educational environments into spaces of emotional resilience, ethical awareness, and global harmony. Drawing on both Buddhist teachings and contemporary research, the study emphasizes how daily mindfulness practices enhance student engagement, educator well-being, and campus culture. Through practical integration into curricula and institutional life, mindfulness emerges not only as a tool for academic success but as a foundation for compassionate leadership and intercultural empathy. The study's strength lies in connecting personal development with broader social impact, though challenges in scalability and cultural adaptation remain.

Ven. Prof. Dr. Milada Polišenská, in *“The Need for Buddhist Values in Western Society with Special Emphasis on Central Europe and Education”*, examines how Buddhist ethics can address the growing moral, educational, and existential crises in Central Europe. Focusing on Czechia's historical encounter with Buddhism, the study links past struggles under totalitarianism with current spiritual decline amid material abundance. Emphasizing the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, it presents Buddhist values as a necessary

compass for both personal development and societal renewal. While the analysis is rooted in regional context, its insights speak to broader concerns of cultural disintegration and the urgent need for ethical grounding.

Prof. Dr. Sunil Kariyakarawana, in *"The Journey of Mindfulness to the West: Its Role in Education for a Compassionate and Sustainable Future"*, offers a critical and reflective analysis of how traditional Buddhist mindfulness has been adapted within Western contexts. Emphasizing its therapeutic appeal and secular accessibility, the study traces mindfulness from its canonical foundations to its modern applications in education and mental health. Kariyakarawana underscores the ethical and spiritual depth of mindfulness in contrast to its often "mechanistic" use in Western settings. While recognizing the benefits of secular mindfulness, the work advocates for a more holistic understanding rooted in Buddhist *sīla*, *saṃādhi*, and *paññā*. Its strength lies in bridging classical doctrine with contemporary relevance, though tensions between traditional integrity and modern utility remain an ongoing discourse.

Asst.Prof.Dr. Asha Singh, in her research titled *"The Role of Buddhist Teachings in Transforming Education for a Sustainable Future"*, positions Buddhist ethics as a transformative force capable of rehumanizing education. She outlines a model that integrates the right view and the right mindfulness to shape a holistic learner. Singh highlights how concepts such as *anicca* (impermanence) and *dukkha* (suffering) can guide students to accept change, develop resilience, and act responsibly. One of the paper's contributions is its ethical emphasis on compassion over competition in learning environments. A limitation is the lack of practical applications or curriculum modules that concretize her philosophical proposals.

Ven. Dr. Gombodorj Myagmarsuren, in the article *"Buddhist Teachings for Public Education in Mongolia: Past & Present"*, offers a thorough exploration of Mongolia's evolving Buddhist educational tradition. The study traces the roots of monastic pedagogy from classical scholasticism – grounded in logic, medicine, and ritual – to its suppression under communist rule and subsequent revival in the democratic era. Emphasizing a modernized, interdisciplinary model, Myagmarsuren advocates for accessible Buddhist education that speaks to today's youth through science, critical reasoning, media, and interfaith dialogue. One of the study's strengths lies in its balance of doctrinal authenticity and innovative pedagogy. While the challenges of modernization remain, the work affirms the Dharma's continued relevance in shaping a compassionate and culturally grounded educational future.

Ms. Cynthia Chantal Infante Medina, in her thoughtful paper *"Unity and Inclusion for Human Dignity: Buddhist Perspectives on World Peace and Sustainable Development"*, argues that Buddhist mindfulness fosters not only individual peace but also collective inclusion. She analyzes the role of *mettā* and *upekkhā* in reducing structural violence and discrimination in education systems. By synthesizing social theory and Buddhist praxis, the author positions mindfulness as a platform for social equity. A limitation, however, is the lack of specific examples illustrating how mindfulness dismantles institutional

exclusion in real-world educational settings.

Dr. Jeffrey Wilson, in “*Subjectivity, Phenomenology and the Notion of Anatta*”, explores the intersection between Buddhist thought and Western phenomenology, particularly regarding the concept of non-self (anatta). By drawing on thinkers like Husserl and Kristeva, the paper contrasts ego-based cognition with Buddhist notions of emptiness and mindfulness. It suggests that true insight arises not from analytical reasoning, but from direct, intuitive experience. The work’s strength lies in bridging meditative practice with contemporary philosophical discourse, offering mindfulness as a pathway to dissolve rigid self-concepts.

Dr. Yun Fu Tien, in “*Bridging Hearts and Minds: Mindfulness, Heartfulness, and AI in Teaching Dharma Chinese in Bhutan for Compassion and Sustainable Development*”, presents a distinctive approach to language education that interweaves Buddhist ethics, emotional cultivation, and technological innovation. Through the “Dharma Chinese” program in Bhutan, the study illustrates how mindfulness and heartfulness practices, integrated with AI tools, enhance not only Mandarin learning but also intercultural understanding, ethical awareness, and spiritual engagement. The strength of the work lies in its holistic pedagogy, demonstrating how language teaching can become a vehicle for compassion, self-reflection, and global citizenship.

Dr. Nguyễn Thị Bích Vân, in “*Mindfulness Education – A Solution to Help Students Face Environmental and Social Crises*”, argues for the urgent integration of Buddhist mindfulness into modern education to address rising ecological, emotional, and moral challenges among youth. The paper explores how mindfulness nurtures compassion, emotional balance, and a sense of social and environmental responsibility. Drawing on both Buddhist philosophy and contemporary research, the study highlights mindfulness as a tool for fostering ethical awareness, sustainable values, and mental resilience. A key strength of the work lies in its practical, age-specific applications – ranging from preschool to university level – and its emphasis on training teachers as mindful role models in the classroom.

2.5. Fostering Unity: Collaborative Efforts for Global Harmony

Ven. Dr. Omalpe Somananda’s article “*Conflict resolution: Buddhist social work approach based on Buddhist teachings*” presents a compelling synthesis between Buddhist ethics and modern social work principles. The author emphasizes the importance of empathy, mindfulness, and non-harming (*ahimsā*) as key instruments in de-escalating community-level conflicts. By integrating Pāli sources like the Kālāma Sutta and Sigalovāda Sutta, the paper constructs a Buddhist model of grassroots peacebuilding that complements secular frameworks of conflict mediation. Case examples from Sri Lanka are used to demonstrate how socially engaged monks can serve as mediators and educators. The article is practical and insightful, though additional statistical or programmatic data would bolster its credibility for policy application.

Prof. Dr. Susanne Von Der Heide’s study “*Collaborative efforts for global*

harmony: History of Buddhism in Germany" presents a compelling analysis of Buddhism's adaptation and contribution to intercultural dialogue in the West. She traces the reception of Buddhist philosophy in Germany from the 19th century to the post-war era, highlighting key figures, institutions, and socio-political movements. The author argues that Buddhism has offered Germans a framework for ethical reflection, trauma healing, and pluralistic ethics in a post-Christian context. While the study offers rich historical insight, its contemporary implications could be more deeply explored, particularly in the context of Germany's increasing multicultural dynamics.

Rida Jelita, in her work titled "*New life concept towards global harmony with the International Nature Loving Association*", integrates Buddhist ethics with eco-spiritual activism. She presents the Nature Loving Association as a model for grassroots engagement in ecological protection and peace education, grounded in principles like compassion for all beings and minimal harm. She argues that environmental degradation and moral decline are interconnected, and both require inner transformation as well as structural reform. The article's strength lies in its real-world orientation and participatory ethos; however, it would benefit from greater clarity on the organization's measurable impact and long-term strategy.

Dr. Lang Heping (Fa Qing)'s paper, "*Unity and Inclusivity in Tiantai Buddhism and Its Significance for World Peace*," presents a thorough examination of how the Tiantai tradition integrates doctrinal complexity with practical adaptability to foster harmony. Rooted in Zhiyi's classification system and the theory of the Round and Inter-inclusive Threefold Truth, the work articulates a vision of unity in diversity, offering a Buddhist framework for interreligious dialogue and global peace. The author emphasizes that Tiantai's syncretic and non-exclusionary approach encourages the recognition of all teachings and traditions as expedient means. By advancing the notion that any spiritual level is valid when rooted in sincerity, the paper situates Tiantai Buddhism as a model for inclusive coexistence in a pluralistic world. It is a compelling contribution to the discourse on religious tolerance and the ethical application of Buddhist principles in modern society.

Ven. Dr. Jinwol Lee's paper, "*A Buddhist Way to Foster Unity and Harmony for the World*," offers a timely exploration of how Buddhist principles – especially compassion, mindfulness, and interdependence – can meaningfully contribute to global peace through active engagement in interfaith movements. Focusing on the United Religions Initiative (URI) as a case study, the author illustrates the compatibility between Buddhist ethics and URI's mission of fostering justice and healing for the Earth and all beings. Through historical examples, doctrinal insights, and practical recommendations, the paper highlights how Buddhist communities can collaborate across traditions to build a culture of mutual respect, peace, and sustainability. It is a valuable contribution to the contemporary discourse on religious pluralism and the Buddhist role in promoting unity within a diverse global society.

In "*The Interconnectedness of Humanity and Human Dignity: Mahāyāna*

Buddhist Teachings for World Peace and Sustainable Development,” Ven. Dr. Thích Hạnh Chánh presents an in-depth exploration of how Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts – especially paṭiccasamuppāda (dependent origination) and collective karma – can inform leadership, ethics, and social justice in the global age. The paper situates human dignity within a web of interdependence, proposing that individual worth must be upheld through mutual responsibility and compassion. Drawing on classical scriptures and philosophical commentary, the study integrates the metaphor of Indra’s Net with contemporary leadership models to argue for systemic transformation grounded in empathy and ethical action. It contributes a robust Buddhist framework for understanding sustainable development, inclusive governance, and collective moral agency in addressing the pressing challenges of the 21st century.

“Bridging worlds: Uniting friends of diverse faiths and traditions for a sustainable environment, global harmony, and world peace” by Prof. Dr. Chang, Yu-Ling explores the potential of Buddhist ecological ethics to bridge faith-based communities. The author emphasizes the interlinking between interfaith collaboration and environmental sustainability, with interbeing and non-harming as central concepts. She discusses successful environmental coalitions in East Asia and the role of monastic communities as catalysts for change. This ecologically engaged Buddhism, if systematically expanded, could support global environmental governance. The paper is conceptually coherent, though future iterations might incorporate more interdisciplinary ecological science for integrated policymaking.

In his paper *“Dharma as culture”*, Dr. Märt Läänemets discusses how Buddhist teachings are not merely religious prescriptions but also foundational cultural values that have shaped Asian civilizations. He traces the integration of dharma into language, education, art, and governance. This cultural lens offers a holistic view of how Buddhism permeates civilizational ethos beyond doctrine. A notable insight is the reframing of dharma as lived culture. Still, more comparative analysis between regions could deepen the discussion and identify divergent interpretations across Buddhist cultures.

In *“Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainability”*, Dato’ Ang Choo Hong presents a far-reaching and grounded vision of how Buddhist principles – especially interconnectedness (paṭiccasamuppāda), anattā (non-self), and the Middle Way – can contribute to global harmony, environmental sustainability, and human dignity. Through practical examples such as ESG-compliant Vesak celebrations, eco-temples, and advocacy for Vesak as a public holiday, the author demonstrates how timeless Buddhist values can meet contemporary societal challenges. The paper also critiques prevailing civilisational paradigms and proposes Buddhist thought as a viable alternative to monotheistic absolutism and consumerism. It is a compelling call for engaged Buddhism that transcends personal practice to address structural injustices and foster inclusive, sustainable development.

“The role of interfaith collaboration in promoting global harmony, with a specific focus on Muslim-majority nation, efforts of preserve Buddhist heritage

sites" by Dr. Numan Anwar investigates the dynamics of religious diplomacy in contexts where Buddhism is a minority tradition. Highlighting Indonesia as a key example, he showcases successful interfaith cooperation in preserving Buddhist sites. This pragmatic approach to heritage conservation through dialogue is commendable. Nonetheless, the study could explore in more depth the long-term sustainability and political challenges of such interfaith efforts.

Most Venerable Bhante Jinalankara, in his paper "*What the Buddha Taught for Sustainable Peace in the World*," articulates a comprehensive Buddhist framework for lasting global peace rooted in inner transformation. Drawing from canonical texts and historical examples, he underscores how peace begins not in treaties but in the mind – through the eradication of greed, hatred, and delusion. The paper explores ethical conduct, meditative discipline, loving-kindness, and wise leadership as indispensable tools for conflict prevention and harmony. Emphasizing the unique Buddhist emphasis on nonviolence, friendship, and self-restraint, the author presents both personal and societal paths to peace. Particularly compelling is the insistence that sustainable peace must arise from sincere inner cultivation, rather than external enforcement. Though deeply rooted in Theravāda tradition, the work offers universal insights into leadership, morality, and the transformative power of compassion.

Dr. Ninh Thị Sinh's study, "*Engaged Buddhism in Vietnam: Compassion in Action and the Social Responsibility of Bhiksuni Như Thanh (1911–1999)*," offers a comprehensive analysis of one of the most influential female monastics in 20th-century Vietnamese Buddhism. By situating Bhiksuni Như Thanh's life and work within the framework of Engaged Buddhism, the paper illustrates how she transformed doctrinal compassion into large-scale social action. Through initiatives in education, healthcare, orphan care, and economic self-sufficiency, Như Thanh not only elevated the status of Buddhist nuns but also institutionalized a model of socially engaged spirituality. The study emphasizes that her contributions went beyond spiritual teachings, becoming a blueprint for sustainable humanitarian efforts rooted in Buddhist ethics. The paper's strength lies in its combination of historical scholarship, gender perspective, and practical relevance – making it a critical resource for understanding Buddhist social engagement in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Dr. Lalan Kumar Jha's paper, "*Compassion, Unity, Integrity and Mindful Efforts for the Sustainable Future: As Depicted in the Theravāda Buddhism*," explores how four core values – karuṇā (compassion), unity, integrity, and mindful effort – intertwine to shape a harmonious and sustainable society. Grounded in early Pāli texts, the study illustrates how these values, deeply embedded in the life and teachings of the Buddha, serve not only personal development but also collective well-being. The paper weaves doctrinal exegesis with historical narratives, showing how figures like Aṅgulimāla and King Ashoka exemplify transformation through compassion and ethical living. Particularly timely is the emphasis on ecological consciousness and moral leadership as tools for sustainable development. While steeped in Theravāda tradition, the paper offers universal insights into moral resilience and social

renewal in times of crisis.

Dr. Kalinga Seneviratne's contribution titled "*Mindful communication: A collaborative approach for peace journalism to global harmony*" introduces a Buddhist framework for ethical journalism. He advocates for "mindful communication" that avoids sensationalism and polarization, promoting empathy and fact-based discourse. The strength of the study lies in its timely critique of media culture and its alignment with the Buddhist virtue of sammā-vācā (right speech). However, implementation models remain underdeveloped, especially concerning media regulation in digital contexts.

In "*Creating More Space, Sharing More Resource: Reimagined Education Approaches for Today's Digital Learners and Sustainable Discourse*," Dr. Edi Ramawijaya Putra proposes a transformative educational framework grounded in Buddhist ethics, sustainability, and global citizenship. Drawing on concepts such as interbeing and humanistic Buddhism, the paper argues that modern education must prioritize compassion, social responsibility, and digital engagement. Through real-world examples and philosophical reflection, it introduces the dual principles of "creating more space" and "sharing more resources" as essential for reforming education in response to environmental degradation, digital saturation, and social inequality. The study also highlights the role of Buddhist youth and digital media in shaping ethical public discourse, advocating a pedagogy rooted in empathy, intercultural understanding, and mindful leadership.

III. CONCLUSION

This volume stands as a scholarly and moral testament to the transformative potential of Buddhist wisdom in our time of crisis and convergence. It affirms that the principles of karuṇā (compassion), mettā (loving-kindness), and paññā (wisdom) are not only foundations for personal development but also essential virtues for global coexistence. At the heart of this inquiry is a call for an ethics of inclusivity: a framework in which all beings are seen as interdependent and worthy of respect, regardless of ethnicity, faith, or nationality.

In foregrounding the theme of unity and inclusivity, this volume brings to light the enduring relevance of the Buddha's teachings for peacebuilding and sustainable development. It provides not only a critique of contemporary societal fragmentation, but also constructive pathways forward through education, dialogue, and meditative insight. These pathways, grounded in non-violence and moral clarity, are indispensable for countering the forces of alienation and antagonism that imperil our shared future.

As editors, we are convinced that the reflections gathered here will inspire new research, interreligious dialogue, and policy advocacy informed by Buddhist ethical vision. In the spirit of the Mahāyāna aspiration to alleviate suffering for all sentient beings, we hope this volume will continue to serve as a bridge between contemplative traditions and the practical imperatives of the modern world.

Future academic inquiry should explore the role of Buddhist ethics

in shaping institutional cultures, particularly within intergovernmental organizations and conflict mediation settings. A promising area of research is the integration of mindfulness and compassionate leadership within public administration and educational systems. Scholars might also examine case studies on how Buddhist communities have contributed to sustainable development in diverse socio-political contexts.

Another vital direction lies in expanding transdisciplinary studies that combine Buddhist psychology with neuroscience, behavioral science, and environmental humanities. This would not only enrich theoretical discourse but also enhance practical applications of Buddhist wisdom for mental health, ecological stewardship, and social transformation. Collaborative projects involving cross-cultural and interreligious partnerships can also further the vision of unity in diversity outlined in this volume.

Ultimately, “Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity” is more than a theme—it is a moral horizon toward which we must collectively strive. In celebrating this shared endeavor during the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025, we affirm our commitment to the Buddhist path as one of wisdom in action, compassion in community, and unity in diversity for human happiness.

On behalf of the Editors:

Most Venerable Dr. Thich Nhat Tu

– Vice President of the National Organizing Committee for UNDV 2025

– Convenor of the Conference

– Vice President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

FOUNDATIONAL BUDDHIST DOCTRINES AND PRINCIPLES OF INNER PEACE



PRINCIPLES OF PEACE IN THE LOTUS SUTRA

Most Ven Thich Tam Thien, Ph.D*

Abstract:

War and peace have been opposing realities throughout the history of humankind. Ending war, creating long-lasting peace has always been the sincere and earnest desire of human beings. Buddhism has been regarded as a religion of peace with teachings of humanistic, equality, and practical philosophy that can be applied in various circumstances of each individual. In this article, the author explains four fundamental principles of the path of serving humanity, such as building a happy and peaceful life for oneself and others, as well as constructing and safeguarding world peace as presented in the Lotus Sutra. This is a famous scripture of Mahayana Buddhism which emphasizes the spirit of Bodhisattvas with their hearts of great compassion desiring to save all sentient beings. In particular, this path begins with nurturing inner peace in the light of truth and wisdom along with the cultivation of virtue. It can be said that the inner peace of each individual is the true cradle of world peace.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Bodhisattva path, inner peace, world peace, virtue, mindfulness, spiritual enlightenment, non-violence, altruism.*

Dear Conference Participants,

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the United Nations Day of Vesak Organizing Committee for holding the UND Vesak 2025 festival in Vietnam. This is the fourth time that Buddhists and friends from around the world have gathered in Vietnam, the beloved Buddhist country, to commemorate the birthday, enlightenment, and *parinirvana* of the Buddha. This auspicious occasion will surely contribute to illuminating and renewing the practical values of Buddhism in the context of modern times amid various changes and insecurities.

The topics of this year's Vesak are significant as they focus on the essence of world peace and the happiness of human life. The core of inner peace is a genuine, vibrant life-force that exists not somewhere outside, but deep within

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the mind of each of us. Indeed, this is the true cradle of world peace. Within the framework of this conference, I would like to contribute this presentation under the title: *Principles of Peace in the Lotus Sutra*, or, in other words, principles of building peace from the perspective of Mahayana Buddhism.

Lotus Sutra is one of the most popular scriptures in Mahayana tradition. The content is an essential guide for the spiritual life of practitioners. Particularly, this divine life is built on the foundation of the world of duality, good and evil, right and wrong. Within the midst of this dualistic quagmire of the ordinary world, a lotus flower emerges, rising above the water, blooming in the air, and spreading its pure fragrance. This symbolic path of purity, “Lotus in the mud,” is not only the practice of the Bodhisattvas, but also a model for living as a Buddhist. It is also a guiding light for the aspirations toward a life of peace and happiness.

In Mahayana tradition, Bodhisattvas are considered the ideal embodiments of compassion, entering the world with the aspiration to benefit all sentient beings, and bring about happiness and peace. In the endeavor to save all beings, Bodhisattvas can traverse all realms in any form, without hindrance. Although the virtuous deeds of Bodhisattvas are immeasurable, their practice and conduct always manifest in the spirit of altruism, benefiting all sentient beings. Through the vows and practices of Bodhisattvas, we can see the fundamental principles of the path of serving humanity, such as building a happy and peaceful life for ourselves and others, as well as constructing and safeguarding world peace. So, what are these principles?

In the Lotus Sutra, chapter 28, the *Encouragement of the Universal Sage Bodhisattva*, records that the Universal Sage Bodhisattva (*Samantabhadra*), along with countless beings from the East came to Vulture Peak (*Gṛdhrakūṭa*) to pay homage to the Buddha and asked: After the nirvana of Tathagata, the Thus Come One, how can the disciples obtain the Lotus Sutra? The Buddha replied that to attain the Lotus Sutra, disciples must fulfill four practices: 1. secure the protection of the Buddhas, 2. plant the roots of virtue, 3. abide in right concentration, and 4. generate the mind of great compassion to save all living beings.¹ These four principles are the main practices of Mahayana Buddhism.

Of course, in the context of this dialogue between the Buddha and Universal Sage Bodhisattva, the concept of *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*) here does not refer to a written scripture. Rather, it implies a spiritual reality, a world of enlightened light and serene existence. This spiritual reality holds within itself a transformative power to liberate ourselves from suffering, and to establish a peaceful life. To enter this world of profound happiness, the Buddha taught practitioners to practice these four principles as basic conditions for cultivating a life of enlightenment. For this presentation, we will analyze some specific details of these principles from the perspective of creating and practicing a life of peace:

¹ The Lotus Sutra (2012): p. 343.

I. SECURE THE PROTECTION OF THE BUDDHAS

It can be understood that a person “who secures the protection of the Buddha” has a deep and strong faith in the Buddhas, thereby establishing a connection of “spiritual resonance” with the Buddhas in the ten directions through genuine belief, illuminated by wisdom. Within that harmonious divine state, a practitioner, in an intimate communication with their pure intrinsic mind, can receive the protection and guidance of the Buddhas, who are always present, at all times, in all places. Honen Shonin, the founding master of the Jōdō lineage in Japan, described this spiritual connection through the magical beauty of moonlight. He emphasized that although the moon is present everywhere, only those who gaze at the moon can truly appreciate its glorious and miraculous beauty (月影のいたらぬ里はなけれども眺むる人の心にぞすむ).² Here, the interconnectedness between the mind of practitioner and the minds of Buddhas is the most important foundation of realizing the truth. In the depths of a devotional heart, the practitioner’s reverence for the Buddhas is expressed not only as the symbolic being of complete virtue and sanctity, but the very act of reverence and respect also awakens the source of vibrant spiritual life. For those with unwavering faith, just a thought of the Buddha or chanting a Buddha’s name may dissolve a sense of self in suffering instantaneously to a certain level. This is the miraculous power of spiritual practice. However, looking to the principle of “creating peace,” this becomes more pragmatic.

Certainly, to build a truly peaceful and sustainable life, we must place ourselves under the protection of truth, wisdom, and noble love. Here, the Buddhas in the ten directions symbolize the embodiment of wisdom and great compassion. If there is a person without wisdom and lacking a compassionate heart, how can he or she create a lasting happy and peaceful life? When lacking in wisdom and not perceiving the truth, we need guidance and direction from those of higher knowledge to enhance our lives. Placing oneself under the guidance of wisdom and truth is a prerequisite for constructing a peaceful and happy life. Furthermore, peace-loving practitioners should see reality as it is (*yathābhūta*), from individual beings to the entire world. This truth shows that we cannot live in peace in our own home alone while our neighbor’s house is constantly in a state of war. While on the path, the *Lotus Sutra* encourages us to seek the blessings and protection of a Buddha, including all Buddhas in the ten directions, and across the three time periods of past, present, and future. The concept of the ten directions and three time periods refers to the essence of the ultimate truth as eternal, universal, and continuous from the past to the future. A person who earnestly seeks to create a peaceful life must first cultivate deep understanding, empathy, and comprehensive sympathy. In the case of peace and war, they will continuously strive to seek the truth, to confront the reality of the causes of war, rather than reaching for the vague dream of peace. Practicing a life of peace does not mean aggressively suppressing war by force;

² The Lotus Sutra. (2012). Senchu Murano translated. Hayward. CA. NBIC.

on the contrary, it requires nurturing love and understanding in every breath and thought. Regardless of the circumstances, a true peacemaker always aims to establish and maintain a spirit of harmony. The *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* refers to the bodhisattvas as peacemakers: “In the midst of great battles, they favor neither side. Great and powerful bodhisattvas delight in bringing people together in harmony.”³

II. PLANT THE ROOTS OF VIRTUE

If the first principle is directed toward the inner mind to develop spiritual light, this second principle focuses on the path of practicing moral living. Planting roots of virtue or fostering the roots of merit is a practical way to contribute to well-being, and it is also a way to live a peaceful life in every thought and action. Here, planting roots of merit and virtue is an expression with a broad meaning, encompassing all areas of spiritual practice related to an altruistic life. It includes acts of kindness: from simple acts such as helping someone cross the street, to larger deeds like fighting hunger and poverty for all people. Most importantly, we should notice that roots of merit and virtue are all nurtured through wholesome deeds of the body, speech, and mind. Therefore, this concept is expanded in various ways of practice.

For a peace ambassador, every thought, word, or action must be imbued with positive energy that can bring about happiness and peace to others. If our actions lack the capacity for goodness, then we cannot create true happiness, or pave the way to peace. This is why great masters of Mahayana tradition often state that the Path to enlightenment is not a spiritual destination, but the way of living. Or, “There is no way to peace, for peace is the way.” This statement is meant to remind us not to wait for world leaders to create peace or expect a future where war is completely absent. Such expectations are mere fantasies. True peace does not mean the absence of war. The true source of peace resides in our thoughts and actions, particularly within the body, speech, and mind of each individual. In the Buddhist view, purifying our karmic actions and cultivating virtuous deeds is the true path to creating genuine happiness and peace for everyone of us.

On the other hand, politicians and world leaders often mention peace through their declarations while religious leaders are seen as messengers of spiritual life. For this reason, the concepts of spirituality and peace, or the sacred and the mundane, are sometimes thought to have little connection with each other. However, these two orientations always condition each other. Leaders advocating for the construction and preservation of peace must have a peaceful mind and a peaceful heart, and must possess both wisdom and compassion. Compassion and wisdom serve as the light to enlightenment. If world leaders have a steadfast spiritual life, engage in the purification of the body, mouth, and mind, their efforts can certainly bring happiness to the people. However, if a leader lacks wisdom and compassion, coupled with greed, hatred, and delusion, their leadership will surely lead to suffering.

³ Common Buddhist Text: Guidance and Insight from the Buddha, 2017, p. 205.

Amidst the fluctuations and uncertainties of the world today, modern philosophers tend to call for world leaders to cultivate their own spiritual lives. Spiritualizing leadership does not mean turning secular leaders into monastic practitioners. Spiritualizing here refers to an internal transformation aimed at developing wisdom and compassion, transforming negative qualities, such as greed, hatred, delusion, into positive virtues, thereby spreading love, and building a peaceful and happy life for everyone. Throughout human history, from ancient times to today, cultivating the roots of virtue has been the cornerstone for creating peace in life.

III. ABIDE IN RIGHT CONCENTRATION

Abide in right concentration (*samadhi*) or reach the stage of steadiness is the essence of inner peace. Confucius said: “When the mind is not present, we look but do not see, listen but do not hear, eat but do not taste the flavors.” (心不在焉，視而不見，聽而不聞，食而不知其味。) Therefore, concentration becomes particularly important in operations of the mind. In Buddhist teachings, right concentration (*samyaksamadhi*) is a part of the Noble Eightfold Path. Right concentration is the practice of focusing on stillness and awareness. Unrestricted by external objects, the mind becomes clearer in stillness compared to its normal state of engaging with external objects. Concentration or meditation is the prerequisite for the arising of wisdom. With moral discipline comes concentration, and with concentration comes wisdom. Here, the Buddha teaches that to attain the *Lotus Sutra*, the practitioner must enter right meditation and achieve right concentration. Because the actual world of *Lotus Sutra* or the *true Dharma* itself is a spiritual reality of true and eternal life of complete wisdom and compassion that transcends all limits of space and time, described as “All dharmas (existences) originally and naturally have the character of tranquil extinction.” Or, “All things are from the outset in the state of tranquil extinction.”⁴ The historical Buddha, all the Buddhas, and all dharmas (phenomena) within the boundless dharma realm have the same character of tranquil extinction.

By realizing the true character of dharmas and seeing the nature of non-self, practitioners will be able to transcend beyond all sufferings and attachments. From this state, we can nourish and develop inner peace as such. In the current turmoil of our world with many tensions, frustrations, and uncertainties, inner peace is the prominent trend, and the only salvation for everyone regardless of time and place.

Indeed, Buddhism teaches that “Peace in mind, peace in life” or “Inner peace creates the world peace.” In the *Dhammapada Sutra*, the Buddha teaches: “Mind is the forerunner of all (good or evil) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows, even as one’s shadow that never leaves.”⁵ The peace of individuals and that of the world originates from the inner mind of each of us. Inner peace itself

⁴ Lotus Sutra, 2012, chapter 2. p. 40.

⁵ The Dhammapada. 2008. p. 05.

harbors immense potential for salvation, capable of bringing healing into any situation. The deeper the inner peace is, the broader its influence spreads out to the world. Sitting still in calmness can bring peace to the world. Because inner peace holds great virtue, its power of contribution extends beyond our imagination. It also enhances our clarity of mind in making important decisions. Ultimately, it is a silent and permanent source of enduring happiness. To protect and uphold world peace, it is crucial to apply this principle to our everyday lives. Inner peace is the key to happiness.

IV. GENERATE GREAT COMPASSION TO SAVE ALL LIVING BEINGS

This principle encourages us to show our compassion and altruistic heart through helping and saving others. Here, the great compassionate mind refers to the ability to be tolerant beyond all boundaries and distinctions between self and others to achieve an equal view and action between friends and enemies. Helping a friend is easier than helping an enemy. Although this distinction is considered normal in human behavior, from the Buddhist perspective, this is the very cause of all confrontations and conflicts. Ultimately, it will lead to self-attachment, turning good deeds into suffering and confusion. Practicing compassion through distinction cannot bring peace to the community and society. Moreover, the greater the distinction, the more it fosters the concept of “a friend is different from an enemy”, hindering equality and harmony. The Buddha emphasizes the practice of great compassion, equanimity, and salvation for all sentient beings. Cultivating such a mindset elevates the quality of the mind, gradually reaching the state of an undifferentiated mind described as *paramita*. A famous passage in the *Diamond Sutra* depicts the significance of *paramita*:

The Buddha said: ‘Subhuti, those who would now set forth on the bodhisattva path should thus give birth to this thought: However many beings there are in whatever realms of being might exist, whether they are born from an egg or born from a womb, born from the water or born from the air, whether they have form or no form, whether they have perception or no perception, in whatever conceivable realm of being one might conceive of beings, in the realm of complete nirvana, I shall liberate them all. And though I thus liberate countless beings, not a single being is liberated.’ ‘And why not?’ ‘Subhuti, a bodhisattva who creates the perception of a being cannot be called a ‘bodhisattva.’⁶

In this context, Bodhisattvas who perform all virtuous deeds with the *paramita* spirit are filled with joy, generosity, and equanimity. In line with this principle, practitioners need to strive to cultivate wisdom and virtues to transcend obstacles originating from self-centeredness and attachments.

In summary, according to the spirit of the *Lotus Sutra*, the four principles mentioned above - secure the protection of the Buddhas, plant the roots of virtue, abide in right concentration, and generate the mind of great compassion,

⁶ Diamond Sutra, 2001.

forms the foundation for building inner peace, and marking the beginning of a spiritual journey. These conditions are fundamental to nurturing inner peace for oneself and others. Moreover, they are essential for building a truly lasting peaceful world. From a spiritual perspective, these conditions are what practitioners need to cultivate and enhance their wisdom and liberation. From a world view, these principles serve as an important guideline that can help free ourselves from the bondage of selfish desires, which are the root cause of endless suffering. Stepping beyond the confines of religious concepts, we can practically re-interpret these four principles and apply them as a way of conduct based on Buddhist wisdom: 1. reverence for truth, 2. doing good deeds, 3. maintaining a pure mind, and 4. cultivating compassion for others.

Finally, there is only one truth. We need to directly perceive the truth because the truth itself does not depend on our viewpoint. We may see within our own limitations, however, the truth remains the same, for it does not change. Acting according to truth can develop lasting happiness and peace. In a world still marred by wars, the most effective and practical path to nurture and cultivate inner peace in our daily lives is to implement and uphold the Principles of Peace in the *Lotus Sutra*.

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

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BUDDHIST CULTIVATION: A PATH OF INNER SERENITY TOWARD GLOBAL PEACE

SHI, Sheng Ying 釋聖因*

Abstract:

In a world increasingly marred by conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation, the teachings of Buddhism offer a profound framework for cultivating inner serenity and fostering global peace. Rooted in the principles of mindfulness, compassion, nonviolence, and wisdom, Buddhism provides transformative practices that enable individuals to address the root causes of suffering both within themselves and in the world around them. This paper explores the significant role of Buddhist cultivation as a path to peace, with a focus on two of the most influential, prominent contemporary Buddhist figures: the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, in advocating for global peace through the cultivation of compassion and engaged Buddhism. Both leaders have developed visions that combine Buddhist principles with practical, socially engaged actions. All these encompass the 'theory of peace education'. Through their teachings and advocacy, they demonstrate how Buddhist practices can be applied to promote global peace efforts, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

The Dalai Lama's advocacy for compassion emphasizes universal responsibility and nonviolent solutions to conflict. This not only emphasizes his commitment to peace but also marks the cornerstone of peacebuilding dispositions, which, even in the face of adversity, highlights the potential of Buddhist teachings to resolve severe disagreements and foster formidable reconciliation. This advocacy aligns with the Diamond Model of Nonviolence, which identifies four levels of peacebuilding dispositions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and world nonviolence, highlighting their interconnection. Research indicates strong correlations between these levels, suggesting that fostering nonviolent attitudes at one level can positively

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influence others, thereby enhancing overall peacebuilding efforts.

Similarly, Thich Nhat Hanh's concept of Engaged Buddhism—integrates mindfulness and the importance of living out Buddhist teachings in daily life to address social, political, and environmental issues. This active social involvement has inspired global movements for peace, justice, and environmental activism. By examining their lives, writings, and case studies of their involvement in peace efforts, this paper demonstrates how Buddhist cultivation practices, such as meditation, mindfulness, and ethical living, offer a holistic approach to peace and can play a critical role in addressing contemporary challenges. In addition to the intrapersonal level, it also acts as a bridge between the individual and the collective and encourages both inner transformation and outer social engagement. By combining philosophical wisdom with practical action, this paper explores how these two world leaders, in their implementation of the Buddhist teachings, offer a powerful, compassionate, and sustainable peace-building framework full of wisdom for addressing the pressing issues of our time and promoting a peaceful, interconnected world.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, Contemplation, Peacebuilding framework, Compassion, Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Global Peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION - THE CONCEPT OF CULTIVATION IN BUDDHISM

The modern world is beset by a range of profound challenges that disrupt both individual lives and collective societies. Violent conflicts are undermining the harmony of communities, widespread social injustices are fomenting unrest, and environmental crises are bringing humanity to the brink of catastrophic destruction of natural resources. On a personal level, mental health disturbances, psychological disorders, social anxiety disorders,¹ emotional disorders, loneliness, and terminal illnesses have become alarmingly commonplace.² Globally, ecological collapse is increasingly seen as an imminent threat. In the midst of these existential crises, Buddhism - rooted in the principles of inner peace, mindfulness, and interconnectedness - offers a transformative framework that can guide both individuals and societies toward sustainable global peace.³ Central to Buddhist practice is meditation techniques that not only catalyze personal transformation but also provide a means for addressing collective societal suffering and dissonance.

Inner peace leading to outer peace is the cornerstone of sustainability. Transformation occurs due to the praxis of education, particularly holistic education and peace education in the formal and informal context. "Connecting inner dimensions of peace education to outer dimensions of peace education is critical for transformative peace efforts aimed at curbing a culture of violence and moving toward a culture of peace. The cultivation of inner peace

¹ Barlow, David H (2014): 6.

² Barlow, David H (2014): 251 - 253.

³ Withagen et al. (2024): 1442.

can contribute to knowledge paradigms that are supportive of peace and can provide a foundation for social action toward supporting peaceful attitudes, dispositions, values, action orientations, behaviors, and social structures. Contemplative practices/meditations are essential to education for peace because inner and outer worlds are not mutually exclusive; rather they mirror and reinforce one another. Therefore, inner violence correlates with outer violence; inner peace correlates with outer peace. Aligning both nonviolent means with nonviolent ends is essential for building sustainable, renewable peace. The connection between *being* peaceful and *doing* peace needs to be more deeply fostered and explored in the field of peace education.”⁴

This paper aims to explore the role of Buddhist cultivation, particularly through the teachings of two influential Buddhist leaders, the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, in fostering peace and justice on both a personal and global scale. This topic is both timely and significant, as it presents a robust framework for connecting individual spiritual practices to broader social and global challenges. Through their respective contributions, these figures have demonstrated how Buddhist principles - such as nonviolence, compassion, wisdom, and social engagement - can be integrated into practical action for peace. This paper will argue that Buddhist meditation practices serve not only as tools for cultivating inner serenity but also as powerful instruments for conflict resolution⁵ and the promotion of global harmony. It emphasizes the simultaneity of both personal transformation and its outward extension to societal and global peacebuilding efforts.

In the secular context, a review of relevant interdisciplinary literature and several recent factor analytic studies revealed that serenity and inner peace encompass four interrelated factors or components: higher power (including spirituality⁶ and search for meaning⁷); harmony (including acceptance/wisdom, anger management, forgiveness, self-compassion, and meditation/mindfulness are essential for achieving a balanced state of mind; and positivity (including happiness, positive emotions such as gratitude, and positive coping and humor enhance subjective well-being, contributing to serenity);⁸ and lifestyle (including living for today, health psychology, pursuit of a simple life, appreciating and engaging in nature, maintaining positive social networks, contributing to society/volunteer efforts, and servant leadership all promote a peaceful lifestyle).⁹

In Buddhism, the term “cultivation” (*Bhāvanā*)¹⁰ refers to the practice of developing one’s mind, ethical conduct, and wisdom in the pursuit

⁴ Brantmeier (2007): 2.

⁵ Sunandabodhi (2024): 6.

⁶ Donets (2022): 89.

⁷ Akhavan (2015): 102.

⁸ Floody, (2014): 58; Chérif et al. (2022): 119.

⁹ Floody (2014): 59.

¹⁰ AN 7.71 and MN 10.

of enlightenment. Buddhist philosophy nurtures key qualities such as mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). These qualities¹¹ are essential for addressing both the internal causes of suffering and the external causes of conflict. Buddhist teachings, including the study of the Four Noble Truths, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path, provide a comprehensive guide to resolving imbalances within individuals and society. The Eightfold Path - comprising right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration - offers a holistic framework for ethical living. All these factors are interwoven, contributing not only to personal serenity but also to societal harmony. Buddhist practices such as mindfulness and contemplation are central to cultivating serenity that, in turn, leads to global peace. These principles are particularly relevant in our current world, which faces increasing divisions and environmental degradation. Note that the difference between Buddhist practices and secular methods of dealing with conflicts is that while peace psychologists have focused primarily on intergroup relations, war, genocide, social injustice, and conflict resolution, positive psychology potentially has much more to offer at the level of personal serenity and inner peace. The personal level of inner peace is paramount for any Buddhist bodhisattva practice of healing oneself and others.

The teachings of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh coincide with secular research that inner peace leads to outer peace, and the intrapersonal level correlates with the societal level. These two brilliant Buddhist teachers provide outstanding leadership by teaching Buddhist cultivation that coincides with secular science.¹² “At the heart of psychotherapy are two interwoven processes, the first is the way in which our brains and minds construct reality, while the second is our ability to modify these constructions to support mental health and well-being. In other words, why are we so vulnerable to constructing distorted realities, and how can we learn to counterbalance these distortions?”

These timeless teachings offer compelling examples of how Buddhist cultivation can address contemporary challenges. Both figures have developed frameworks that integrate Buddhist principles with practical action for peace, demonstrating how compassion and nonviolence can resolve conflicts and promote social justice. It is crucial to understand how the personal level affects the societal level; inter-relationships with each sector of the community help to alleviate inequalities. Intersectionality is vital for understanding how various identities influence experiences of inequality.¹³ By exploring these two leaders’ work within the context of current global crises, this paper will illustrate the transformative power of Buddhist meditation practices. Their teachings show that inner peace is not a retreat from the world but rather a

¹¹ AN 7.71 “Monks, I do not see even one other thing that brings such benefit as mental development.”

¹² Kent & Wittmann (2021): 133.

¹³ Perkins & Bell (2024): 90.

foundation for positive social change. By framing their contributions within the contemporary context of systemic injustice, environmental crises, and technological advancements such as Artificial General Intelligence, we can appreciate the ongoing relevance and urgency of Buddhist teachings.

Role models like the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh are essential for the development and application of spiritual practices. These figures provide tangible examples of how compassion and nonviolence – the foundational ethical principles of Buddhism – can be embodied in a world that often seems driven by division and conflict. Through their advocacy for global peace¹⁴ and secular ethics, they highlight the potential of Buddhist teachings to address contemporary societal challenges. In an age where technological advances such as Artificial General Intelligence pose new ethical dilemmas, Buddhist principles offer a framework for responsible decision-making grounded in compassion and mindfulness.

Through their teachings, the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh offer practical tools that can be incorporated into peacebuilding strategies. These include concepts such as Engaged Buddhism, Interdependence, and the cultivation of social justice and environmental sustainability. Each of these concepts provides a lens through which we can view the world more holistically, seeing the interconnectedness of all beings and the necessity of compassionate action. In this way, Buddhist teachings are not abstract ideals but concrete practices with the potential to address the complex global issues we face today. As Buddhist practices continue to gain relevance in addressing systemic injustice,¹⁵ environmental degradation¹⁶, and escalating global conflicts,¹⁷ they offer essential insights into how we can cultivate peace at both personal and collective levels. This paper argues that Buddhist practices cannot alienate themselves from the secular world; it should address injustice, humanity rights, peaceful conduct and so forth, it should start from the self and spread out to others. While systemic injustice is often viewed through the lens of oppression and inequality,¹⁸ some argue that it can also serve as a catalyst for social movements and collective action, fostering resilience and advocacy among affected communities¹⁹.

In conclusion, Buddhist teachings, particularly those of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, offer a profound and urgently needed response to the crises of our time. Through the cultivation of mindfulness, compassion, and nonviolence, individuals and societies can begin to address the root causes of suffering and conflict, fostering a more interconnected, empathetic, and peaceful world. As the global community confronts the challenges of the 21st

¹⁴ Do (2014): 278.

¹⁵ Khetjoi & Thasa (2017): 223.

¹⁶ Mahatthanadull (2015): 78.

¹⁷ Yadav, V (2023): 190.

¹⁸ Anālayo, B. (2020):75.

¹⁹ Haslanger (2022): 321.

century, the wisdom of Buddhism offers a timeless and practical path toward creating a more just, compassionate, and sustainable future.

II. THE DALAI LAMA'S ADVOCACY FOR COMPASSION

2.1. Background and Historical Context

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, born in 1935, ascended to the leadership of Tibet at a remarkably young age. His early years were deeply immersed in the rich traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, where the focus was on spiritual growth alongside intellectual development. His education, initially within the Tibetan Buddhist worldview, not only shaped his spiritual beliefs but also informed his later engagement with the world's pressing issues. We understand that education is fundamental to all changes. Education that transforms requires key principles that include collaboration, contextual understanding, and leadership capacity building²⁰. The Dalai Lama's leadership has been formulated at an early stage. His teachings on compassion, rooted in this early education, became central to his approach to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, providing a robust framework for peaceful interaction across cultural and geopolitical boundaries.

The political landscape shifted dramatically in 1959 when the Chinese People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet, forcing the Dalai Lama into exile in India. This pivotal moment in his life marked the beginning of his tireless advocacy for the Tibetan people's rights and autonomy, as well as a broader commitment to global peace. Despite the geopolitical turmoil, his response was firmly grounded in the Buddhist ideals of nonviolence and compassion as he resisted military aggression while seeking peaceful solutions to Tibet's struggle for autonomy. This deeply personal experience intertwined his spiritual life with political engagement, forming the foundation of his global vision, which now extends far beyond Tibet to address universal concerns. His teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of all people²¹, fostering empathy and compassion across national, religious, and cultural lines. The Dalai Lama's voice has since become a beacon for peace, compassion, and nonviolence on the world stage, providing a model for conflict resolution rooted in human dignity.

The Dalai Lama's philosophical framework is anchored in two core Buddhist teachings: *karuṇā* (compassion) and *prajñā* (wisdom). His life's work, both as a spiritual leader and as a global advocate, has focused on promoting these values not only within Tibetan culture but also within the broader international community. He firmly believes that by cultivating compassion for all beings - irrespective of nationality, religion, or background - humanity can move toward a more peaceful and harmonious world.

2.1.1. Introduction to the Dalai Lama's Life and Philosophy

The Dalai Lama's advocacy for compassion is not confined to a personal spiritual journey; rather, it is a deeply philosophical and practical framework

²⁰ Madrid & Chapman (2024): 145.

²¹ Ricard, M. (2011): 211.

for global peace. Central to his teachings is the idea that peace cannot be achieved unless compassion is cultivated both individually and collectively. His emphasis on compassion as a fundamental value aims to address suffering in all its forms, whether it be physical, emotional, or social. Compassion, in his view, is not an abstract or passive emotion, but an active and engaged force capable of transforming societies.

His concept of universal responsibility²² calls upon every individual to take responsibility for the well-being of others, recognizing that personal happiness and global peace are interdependent. By acting with compassion and cultivating a sense of shared responsibility, individuals contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and just world. This universal responsibility is a call for empathy across national, cultural, and religious boundaries, underscoring the Dalai Lama's belief in a global community rooted in mutual care.

2.1.2. Compassion as a Pathway to Global Peace

For the Dalai Lama, compassion is not simply an emotional reaction to suffering; it is a comprehensive, active response that seeks to alleviate suffering in concrete ways. Compassion entails a commitment to the well-being of others that goes beyond sympathy and moves into the realm of action. In this sense, compassion is inextricably linked with the Buddhist notion of *prajña*—wisdom²³. Wisdom here is understood as the ability to recognize the interdependence of all beings and the nature of suffering. By cultivating wisdom, individuals can make decisions that reflect the interconnectedness of humanity and the world.

The Dalai Lama's practical application of compassion can be seen in his long-standing advocacy for the rights of the Tibetan people, particularly in his calls for nonviolent resistance to the Chinese government's actions in Tibet. His efforts have emphasized dialogue over confrontation, a belief rooted in his commitment to nonviolence,²⁴ or *ahimsā*. In his public speeches and writings, the Dalai Lama regularly stresses that true peace is not the mere absence of violence but the presence of positive qualities such as compassion, understanding, and mutual respect.

One of the most profound aspects of his message is the way in which he connects personal practice with global peace²⁵. He speaks of the need for individuals, communities, and governments to embrace compassion as a guiding force. In his view, compassion is the antidote to the violence, anger, and hatred that fuel global conflict. He envisions a world where compassion is a universal practice, accessible to everyone, regardless of background or belief.

²² Stril-Rever, S. (2016): 84.

²³ In Buddhism, *karuna* (compassion) and *prajna* (wisdom) are like the two wings of a bird, two wheels of a cart, these are the basic qualities of a bodhisattva. These qualities are expounded in all Buddhist traditions and can be seen in both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh.

²⁴ Steffen, L. (2009): 118.

²⁵ Kabat-Zinn, J. and Davidson, R.J.(ed.) (2012): 120.

His teachings suggest that the cultivation of compassion is the key to resolving global tensions and fostering peaceful coexistence.

2.2. Compassion and Secular Ethics

One of the Dalai Lama's significant contributions to global peacebuilding is his promotion of secular ethics²⁶ - an approach to morality grounded in universal human values such as kindness, compassion, and mutual respect, independent of religious affiliation. While deeply rooted in his Buddhist background, the Dalai Lama has consistently worked to make the principles of Buddhism accessible to people of all faiths and backgrounds. He argues that compassion and ethical behavior are not confined to religious practice but should be embraced as fundamental human values that transcend religious boundaries.

Secular ethics, as articulated by the Dalai Lama, emphasize the common humanity shared by all people. He advocates for a moral framework in which compassion is central, urging individuals to act in ways that promote the well-being of others, regardless of their race, religion, or nationality. This approach, rooted in the understanding of shared human dignity, has broad appeal, particularly in a world that is increasingly pluralistic and diverse. By framing compassion within the context of secular ethics, the Dalai Lama has broadened the reach of his teachings, making them relevant to people of all faiths, as well as those who may not adhere to any religious tradition at all.

Through dialogues²⁷ with scientists, politicians, social activists, and leaders from various sectors, the Dalai Lama has demonstrated that secular ethics, founded on the principles of compassion, can be a transformative tool for addressing global issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. His advocacy has helped to pave the way for a more compassionate approach to global governance and conflict resolution.

2.3. The Dalai Lama's Role in Global Peace Movements

2.3.1. Nonviolence and Diplomacy

The Dalai Lama has long been recognized as one of the world's foremost advocates for nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution. Concurrent with the Buddhist Teaching, the Dalai Lama's commitment to nonviolence (or *ahimsā*)²⁸ is central to his approach to global diplomacy. This commitment is

²⁶ Ozawa-de Silva, Brendan R. (2014) p. 91. *Secular Ethics, Embodied Cognitive Logics, and Education*, if ethical contemplative practices are to be universal, it needs to be secular. Religions can only be applicable for that tradition, whereas secular ethics is the principle of ethics being broadly implemented.

²⁷ Ricard, M. (2011): 275. The Dalai Lama mentions a 'Buddhist science,' a science of mind. Ricard considers that if happiness is a state of mind that depends on the inner and outer conditions, then these conditions within must be recognized before inner peace and world peace can be achieved.

²⁸ MN 8, PTS: M. I.40, translated from the Pali by Nyanaponika Thera. "I say that even the arising of a thought concerned with salutary things [and ideas] is of great importance, not to speak of bodily acts and words conforming [to such thought]. Therefore, Cunda: (1) The thought should

most evident in his efforts regarding the Tibet-China conflict, where he has consistently called for dialogue over armed resistance. Despite the ongoing political tensions, the Dalai Lama has refrained from advocating violence, instead focusing on peaceful negotiation and diplomatic solutions²⁹. As can be seen, many Buddhist teachings are manifested in the Dalai Lama's peacekeeping actions, showing every aspect of welfare for the multitude, incorporating goodwill for everyone.

This approach is rooted in his understanding of compassion as an active force for peace. He has always believed that conflicts can be resolved through mutual respect, understanding, and empathy - qualities that are intrinsic to the practice of compassion. Compassion must be exercised on a personal and collective level. This relates to understanding of self and the biases that are inherent with the conflicts that arise in our daily lives. Wisdom and compassion must be well-practiced, this is similar to a secular view of why conflicts and hence attachment arise due to insecurities felt by the individual and the collective³⁰.

His efforts in international diplomacy, including his advocacy for Tibet's rights on the global stage, have showcased his belief in the power of peaceful advocacy. His diplomatic work and calls for peaceful solutions to the Tibet-China conflict reflect his broader vision of a world in which dialogue, understanding, and compassion are the primary tools for resolving disputes.

2.3.2. The Dalai Lama's Legacy

The Dalai Lama's legacy extends far beyond his role as the spiritual leader of Tibet. His advocacy for human rights, interfaith dialogue, and environmental protection have reshaped the global discourse on peace and conflict resolution. His teachings have demonstrated that true peace is not merely the absence of violence but the presence of positive moral values³¹ such as compassion, forgiveness, and mutual respect. Through his speeches, writings, and actions,

be produced: 'Others will be harmful; we shall not be harmful here.' (2) The thought should be produced: 'Others will kill living beings; we shall abstain from killing living beings here.

²⁹ MN 21, PTS: M I 122 *Kakacupama Sutta: The Simile of the Saw*. In any event, you should train yourselves: 'Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person's welfare, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will — abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.' That's how you should train yourselves.

³⁰ Kent & Wittman. (2021): 211.

³¹ Mahara, Priyadarshini. (2018). "Dalai Lama - Epitome of World Peace and Harmony", in *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, Volume 7, Issue 12(1), December 2018. p. 197-203. [https://ijmer.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/volume7/volume7-issue12\(1\)-2018.pdf#page=206](https://ijmer.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/volume7/volume7-issue12(1)-2018.pdf#page=206) p. 200. In the discussion of the practice such as the Four Noble Truths, it is not just an absence of the negative qualities, everyone has a responsibility to cultivate of the positive qualities such as compassion and wisdom.

the Dalai Lama has shown that peacebuilding is not solely a political endeavor but a moral and spiritual one as well.

His legacy also lies in his ability to inspire individuals and leaders across the globe to embrace compassion as a guided principle in their own lives and in their leadership. The Dalai Lama's call for universal responsibility - his belief that every individual is responsible for the well-being of others and the planet - offers a framework for peace that transcends national borders and religious affiliations. His teachings on compassion, when put into practice, have the potential to transform³² not just individual lives but the world at large.

2.4. Case Studies of Compassion in Action

2.4.1. The Tibet - China Dialogue

A central aspect of the Dalai Lama's advocacy for peace has been his calls for dialogue with the Chinese government, rooted in compassion and mutual respect. Despite numerous setbacks and the complexities of the Tibet-China conflict, the Dalai Lama has continually emphasized the need for dialogue over confrontation. His approach reflects his belief that genuine peace can only be achieved when both sides recognize their shared humanity and act with compassion.

In addition to his work with China, the Dalai Lama's efforts to promote human rights, environmental stewardship, and social justice have influenced global diplomacy and peacebuilding initiatives. His leadership in these areas has exemplified the power of compassion to effect real-world change, demonstrating that when individuals and governments act out of a sense of empathy and responsibility, it is possible to create positive social transformation.

Through his advocacy for Tibet's rights and his promotion of secular ethics, the Dalai Lama has demonstrated that compassion is not just a spiritual practice but a powerful tool for addressing global issues. As exemplified in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 1989, the Dalai Lama's advocacy for compassion has had a profound impact on how the world approaches conflict resolution, global peace, and human dignity.

2.4.2. The Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech

The Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 1989 encapsulates his belief in compassion as a transformative force for peace. He famously stated: "I believe the prize is a recognition of the true values of altruism, love, compassion, and nonviolence which I try to practice."³³

In his words and actions, the Dalai Lama has demonstrated that leadership rooted in compassion is not only possible but necessary for creating lasting

³² Khuddaka, *Sutta Nipata*, Sn 3. 3 PTS, in accordance to what is taught in the suttas, the Dalai Lama's words and teachings are 'well-spoken, just, endearing,' had inspired many, as in the scriptures "The calm say that what is well-spoken is best; second, that one should say what is just, not unjust; third, what's endearing, not un-endearing; fourth, what is true, not false." The Truth would inspire all that is close to him.

³³ <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1989/lama/acceptance-speech/>

peace. His advocacy for human rights, his emphasis on the importance of universal responsibility, and his unwavering commitment to nonviolence provide a timeless framework for peacebuilding in the 21st century.

III. THICH NHAT HANH'S ENGAGED BUDDHISM

3.1. Life of Thich Nhat Hanh and Early Activism During the Vietnam War

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk born in 1926, is one of the most influential spiritual leaders of the modern era. His contributions to Buddhism, peace activism, and global social justice have had a lasting impact, particularly through his development of *Engaged Buddhism*. Nhat Hanh's journey began in the turmoil of 20th-century Vietnam, where he witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of war. As a young monk, he was trained in the traditional Buddhist practices of meditation, monastic discipline, and the pursuit of enlightenment. However, it was during the Vietnam War that he came to realize the urgent need to extend these practices beyond the monastery to address the suffering of society at large.

In the 1960s, during the height of the Vietnam War, Nhat Hanh became an outspoken advocate for peace, calling for reconciliation between the warring parties and an end to the violence that was tearing his homeland apart. As a pacifist and a follower of Buddhist principles, he was deeply moved by the suffering of the people and showed his compassion by promoting peace as a core of his teachings. Nhat Hanh recognized that the war was not only a political and military struggle but a spiritual and moral crisis. His efforts during this period laid the foundation for his later development of *Engaged Buddhism*, a movement that seeks to address suffering through active involvement in social, political, and environmental causes, rooted in Buddhist teachings.

Nhat Hanh's activism began with his work as a spiritual leader and teacher. He co-founded the *Order of Interbeing*³⁴ between 1964 and 1966, a network of Buddhist monks and laypeople dedicated to promoting peace through mindfulness and compassionate action. His participation in peace talks and his efforts to mediate between warring factions were central to his activism. In 1966, Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh was invited by Martin Luther King Jr.³⁵ to speak on behalf of the Vietnamese people, helping to raise awareness of the horrors of the war. This interaction between two leading figures of peace movements from different parts of the world led to the broader spread of his

³⁴ Order of Interbeing (Vietnamese: Thien Hiep, Chinese 相即) is a group established by Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh in Saigon in 1966, the Order of Interbeing was founded in the Linji tradition of Buddhist meditative practice and emphasizes the Four Spirits: non-attachment from views, direct experimentation on the nature of interdependent origination through meditation, appropriateness, and skilful means. The first six members of the order, ordained together on February 5, 1966, were colleague and students of Thich Nhat Hanh who worked with him relieving the suffering of war through projects organized by the School of Youth for Social Service. In joining the Order of Interbeing, they dedicated themselves to the continuous practice of mindfulness, ethical behavior, and compassionate action in society.

³⁵ <https://plumvillage.org/they-call-you-a-bodhisattva-thich-nhat-hanh-s-friendship-with-dr-king>.

ideas. Nhat Hanh's call for peace and dialogue, grounded in compassion and mutual respect, contrasted sharply with the prevailing violence of the time, his kindness and wisdom had been embedded in all his actions which was an outstanding manifestation of his call for peace.

The political climate in Vietnam during the 1960s was deeply polarized, and Nhat Hanh's calls for peace and reconciliation were viewed with suspicion by both sides. In 1966, his outspoken stance led to his exile from Vietnam, a significant moment in his life that marked the beginning of his international role as a peace advocate. This period of exile would eventually enable him to reach a global audience, where his philosophy of *Engaged Buddhism* would influence peace movements, environmental activism, and interfaith dialogue across the world.

3.2. Early Years in Vietnam, the Buddhist Context, and Personal Experiences during the Vietnam War

Nhat Hanh's early life in Vietnam provided the foundation for his later activism. Growing up amid French colonialism and the tumultuous political climate of post-colonial Vietnam, he was deeply influenced by the teachings of Vietnamese Buddhism, which was historically shaped by the Mahayana tradition. Buddhist monastic life in Vietnam was typically focused on meditation, scholarship, and ritual practice, but Nhat Hanh's formative years were marked by the dramatic political and social changes that began in the 1940s and escalated with the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

In this environment, Ven. Nhat Hanh's spiritual training was deeply intertwined with the need for social engagement. His commitment to alleviating suffering led him to study not only Buddhist scriptures but also the social and political issues facing Vietnam. The Buddhist community in Vietnam had traditionally been politically passive, but the war—and the widespread suffering it caused—called for a more active response. As a young monk, Ven. Nhat Hanh became increasingly disillusioned with the traditional focus on monasticism and began advocating for a form of Buddhism that directly addressed the pressing issues of the time.

During the war, Nhat Hanh saw that the suffering of the Vietnamese people could not be separated from the violence and oppression brought about by the war. He began speaking out against the war's devastating effects on both the soldiers and civilians, recognizing that spiritual peace could not exist while the people of Vietnam were suffering. His early activism was focused on promoting non-violent dialogue and reconciliation between the opposing sides of the conflict. He also worked with the War Resisters League and other peace organizations, calling for a ceasefire and the cessation of violence. He believed that true peace could only be achieved through mutual understanding and compassion, not through the continuation of warfare.

Through his efforts, Nhat Hanh developed a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all beings³⁶ - a concept that would become central to

³⁶ Sieber, Alexander. (2015): 5

his philosophy of *Engaged Buddhism*. This understanding, which he called *interbeing*, highlights the deep interconnection between individuals, society, and the environment. It calls for a compassionate response to suffering, acknowledging that the suffering of one person is tied to the suffering of all people. As a result, Nhat Hanh's activism was not just limited to the war but expanded to address broader issues of social justice, human rights, and ecological sustainability.

3.3. Development of the Concept of “Engaged Buddhism”

Thich Nhat Hanh coined the term *Engaged Buddhism* to describe the application of Buddhist principles to social, political, and environmental action. For Nhat Hanh, Buddhism was never intended to be an isolated, introspective practice limited to monasteries. Instead, it was meant to be a force for transforming the world. As he observed the suffering caused by war, poverty, and injustice, he realized that spiritual practice must go beyond personal enlightenment to include the collective welfare of society. Thus, he sought to apply Buddhist teachings - especially mindfulness, compassion, and the concept of *interbeing* - as tools for social change.

*Engaged Buddhism*³⁷ challenges the traditional notion of Buddhism as a solely contemplative or monastic practice. It calls on Buddhists to actively address the social, political, and ecological crises of the world, to intervene in issues of social injustice, and to work towards alleviating the collective suffering of humanity. This perspective emerged out of Nhat Hanh's experiences during the Vietnam War, where he saw firsthand how political conflict exacerbated human suffering and undermined the spiritual teachings of compassion and non-violence. By calling for Buddhists to engage directly with the world, Nhat Hanh envisioned a path where spirituality and activism could coexist, leading to a more just and peaceful world.

3.4. The Core of Thich Nhat Hanh's Engaged Buddhism – Interbeing

At the heart of *Engaged Buddhism* is the idea that Buddhist teachings should not remain confined to personal liberation but should be actively applied to alleviate social suffering. Nhat Hanh teaches that mindfulness, compassion, and awareness of the interconnectedness of all things are essential tools for social change. Mindfulness is seen as a tool not only for personal peace but also for societal transformation. In this view, individuals can cultivate peace within themselves, which then radiates outward to affect the broader world.

The concept of *interbeing* is central to Nhat Hanh's philosophy. According to Sieber (2015), “What sets Hanh's order apart from other American Zen movements is that engaged Buddhism encompasses “all aspects of life, from family practice to public policy and culture.”³⁸ He defines *interbeing* as the recognition that all things are interconnected - what happens to one person,

³⁷ See Sieber (2015): 3. “Hanh adapted the religious scaffolding of traditional Buddhism for his new form of peace activism, engaged Buddhism.”

³⁸ Queen (2000): 35 - 36.

or one part of the world affects everyone and everything. For Nhat Hanh, this understanding of interconnectedness forms the basis for ethical living and social action. The recognition that one's suffering is linked to the suffering of others compels individuals to act with compassion, wisdom, and justice in their interactions with others and the world.

Moreover, Ven. Nhat Hanh emphasizes the importance of non-attachment in addressing social injustice. Buddha's Teaching through and through stress the attachment³⁹ arises from the five aggregates. According to Ven. Nhat Hanh, the root causes of much of the world's suffering stem from egoism, greed, and the desire for power and control. The mind is responsible for this turmoil, to address this imbalance, Ven. Nhat Hanh argues that mindfulness can help individuals transcend these attachments and act with greater empathy and compassion toward others. By cultivating mindfulness, people can gain insight into the root causes of suffering and engage in actions that promote peace and justice.

3.5. Mindfulness as a Tool for Peace and Social Change

Mindfulness is central to Nhat Hanh's philosophy of *Engaged Buddhism*. However, mindfulness is not just a meditative practice; it is an active form of awareness that can be applied in all aspects of life, from the simple act of walking to speaking with others⁴⁰. Nhat Hanh teaches that mindfulness can be a powerful tool for cultivating compassion and responding to the world's suffering.

Mindfulness, in Nhat Hanh's view, is the practice of being fully present at each moment. It involves being aware of one's thoughts, actions, and feelings, as well as the impact those actions have on the world. This practice encourages individuals to act with greater awareness and responsibility, which in turn can lead to more compassionate and wise responses to social, political, and environmental issues.

For Nhat Hanh, mindfulness is the key to addressing the challenges of modern society, from war and conflict to environmental degradation and social injustice. Through mindfulness, individuals can become more aware of the interconnectedness of all beings and the ways in which their actions contribute to the larger world. This awareness can lead to more compassionate, sustainable choices in everyday life, such as mindful consumption, ethical decision-making, and environmental activism.

³⁹ SN 22. 22 PTS: S. III. 25 *Bhāra Sutta: The Burden*, "And which, monks, is the burden? That of which it should be said: the five clung-to aggregates. [5] "Which five? The form clung-to aggregate, the feeling clung-to aggregate, the perception clung-to aggregate, the formative mental functions clung-to aggregate, the sensory consciousness clung-to aggregate. This, monks, is called the burden."

⁴⁰ Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh. (1991): 35. "If you know how to apply meditation to dinner time, leisure time, sleeping time, it will penetrate your daily life, and it will also have a tremendous effect on social concerns. Mindfulness can penetrate the activities of everyday life, each minute, each hour of our daily life, and not just be a description of something far away." In *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*.

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNER PEACE AND GLOBAL PEACE

4.1. Comparative Analysis of Compassion and Engaged Buddhism

4.1.1. Common Themes: Compassion, Nonviolence, and Interdependence

Buddhism offers a profound ethical framework for individual⁴¹ and collective peace, with two central figures - Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama - having significantly shaped contemporary understandings of global peace. Despite the nuances in their approaches, both share a deep commitment to compassion, nonviolence, and the recognition of interdependence, which are key to their teachings on inner and global peace.

4.1.2. Interdependence (*Pratītyasamutpāda*)

At the heart of both Nhat Hanh's and the Dalai Lama's teachings is the concept of interdependence, a fundamental Buddhist principle known as *Pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination)⁴². This principle asserts that all phenomena are interconnected and arise from complex causes and conditions. It suggests that the suffering of one individual is tied to the suffering of all beings, and hence, true peace can only be achieved through collective transformation. This idea is the foundation of *sunyata*.

Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh's concept of *interbeing* exemplifies this idea—he often emphasizes that we are all interconnected, and one's suffering is inseparable from the suffering of others. This interconnectedness means that inner peace is not merely an individual pursuit, but a collective one. As individuals cultivate inner peace through mindfulness, compassion, and meditation, this can have a ripple effect, transforming relationships, and communities, and ultimately contributing to global peace.

Similarly, the Dalai Lama teaches that personal transformation, grounded in the understanding of interdependence, is vital to resolving global conflicts. He often speaks of *the oneness of humanity*⁴³, reminding us that we share a common destiny on this planet and that the flourishing of one depends on the flourishing of all. This shared fate underscores the importance of cultivating peace within

⁴¹ Gunaratana, Henepola, (1995): 234. "The practice of serenity meditation aims at developing a calm, concentrated, unified mind as a means of experiencing inner peace and as a basis for wisdom"

⁴² Thanissaro Bhikkhu (1997): 89. The concept of dependent-arising is the foundation block of all Buddhist traditions. Not only is it important in Buddhist philosophy, the eight-negations are also fundamental to the meditation practice. This concept has been discussed both scholastically (eg. Kawamura, L., 1998, Suwanvarangkul, Chaisit, 2015) as well as used in cultivation practice.

⁴³ This is not a new concept; one humanity and the co-existence and co-prosperity concepts have been discussed in recent years. The unique contribution by Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh is his idea of everyone and everything is interconnected. Myong, Soon-ok; and Chun, Byong-soon. (2018): 190.

ourselves as a foundational step in fostering peace across the world.

4.1.3. Compassion (*Karuṇā*) and Loving-kindness (*Mettā*)

Compassion (*Karuṇā*) and loving-kindness (*Mettā*) are core aspects of Buddhist ethics and play a central role in the peace-building efforts of both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh. Compassion, in the Buddhist context, is the deep desire to alleviate the suffering of others, while loving-kindness is the wish for all beings to be happy and free from suffering. Both virtues require an expansive view of self and others, transcending egoistic concerns and cultivating a mind that sees beyond self-interest.

For Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Mettā*, and *Karuṇā* are not just ideals but practices. His emphasis on mindfulness as a tool for cultivating compassion is central to his Engaged Buddhism. In his view, mindfulness helps individuals become fully aware of the present moment, and in doing so, they develop a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all beings. Mindful actions - whether in listening, speaking, or working—are infused with compassion, creating a compassionate presence that can transform personal and social interactions.

The Dalai Lama also emphasizes the importance of compassion as a global force. He often discusses the “universality of compassion,”⁴⁴ arguing that it transcends religious and cultural boundaries. His teachings suggest that compassion is not only beneficial for personal well-being but is essential for social harmony and global peace. For instance, his advocacy for secular ethics - ethics based on compassion and respect for all human beings regardless of religious belief - aligns with the idea that compassionate action can solve not only individual suffering but also systemic social issues.

4.1.4. Differences in Approach: Secular Ethics vs. Monastic Engagement

While both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh emphasize compassion, nonviolence, and interdependence, their approaches to these concepts differ, primarily in their orientation toward secular versus monastic life.

4.2. Buddhist Ethics and Social Harmony⁴⁵

4.2.1. The Dalai Lama’s Secular Ethics

The Dalai Lama’s teachings on ethics are grounded in the belief that compassion, and nonviolence are universal principles that can be applied by people of all faiths or no faith. He emphasizes a secular ethics that does not

⁴⁴ Compassion and wisdom are the central Buddhist practices. Buddha’s discourses are prevalent in all traditions, for example. Sn 1.8 PTS: *Sn 143-152 Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha’s Words on Loving-Kindness*

⁴⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (1998): 78. *The Problem of Conflict*. As stated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, we must demonstrate the value of harmony. “The model we must emulate is that provided by the Master in his description of the true disciple: “He is one who unites the divided, who promotes friendships, enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, and who speaks words that promote concord.”

rely on Buddhist doctrine but is rooted in the inherent dignity of all human beings. This secular ethics is based on the idea that every individual, regardless of religious affiliation, can cultivate compassion and contribute to global peace.

His call for secular ethics aims to bring a universal approach to social and political challenges, advocating for peace, social justice, and environmental sustainability from a humanitarian perspective. His approach encourages people worldwide, regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds, to engage with Buddhist principles such as compassion and interdependence in ways that resonate with their own values and traditions.

4.2.2. Thich Nhat Hanh's Monastic-Based Practice

In contrast, Thich Nhat Hanh's approach is rooted in monastic life and the application of Buddhist teachings in daily life. His *Engaged Buddhism* emphasizes that personal spiritual practice, grounded in mindfulness and meditation, must be integrated with social and political action. For Nhat Hanh, the monastic life is not an escape from the world but a profound engagement with it. Monks and nuns play an active role in society, contributing to peace, justice, and environmental sustainability through their practices.

Nhat Hanh's approach, while universal in its call for mindfulness and compassion, is particularly focused on how Buddhist monastic life can serve as a model for engaged social action. He often advocates for the importance of meditation and mindfulness as tools for cultivating inner peace, which then ripples out to create social harmony.

4.2.3. Complementarity of Approaches

While the Dalai Lama's emphasis on secular ethics and Thich Nhat Hanh's monastic-based practice might seem distinct, these approaches complement each other in the global context. The Dalai Lama's secular ethics provides a broad, inclusive framework for global peacebuilding⁴⁶, while Nhat Hanh's monastic-based practice offers a model for individual transformation⁴⁷ through deep spiritual discipline. Together, these approaches offer both practical and

⁴⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2006): 370. *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Noted in this article are the characteristics of Buddha's Teaching. Firstly, Self-reliance "By oneself is evil done, by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone, by oneself is one purified. Purity and defilement depend on oneself; no one can purify another" (*Dhp* 165), "You yourselves must strive, the Buddha only points the way. Those who meditate and practice the path are freed from the bonds of death" (*Dhp* 276). Secondly, Experiential emphasis (*AN* 3.65). The third factor is Universality (*Ud* 5.5). The final factor is the Code of Ethics.

⁴⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (1998): 198. *Message for a Globalized World*. Bhikkhu Bodhi resonates the same message as that of Ven. Nhat Hanh, the message to the world is: "A spiritually sensitive mind would not look upon these problems as isolated phenomena to be treated by piecemeal solutions, but would insist on probing into unexplored areas for hidden roots and subtle interconnections." "The most valuable contribution that the Buddha's teaching can make to helping us resolve the great dilemmas facing us today is twofold: first, its uncompromisingly realistic analysis of the psychological springs of human suffering, and second, the ethically ennobling discipline it proposes as the solution."

spiritual tools for individuals and organizations working toward peace.

4.3. The Role of Monastics and Lay People in Cultivating Peace

In traditional Buddhist societies⁴⁸, monks and nuns are often viewed as the primary agents of spiritual practice. They dedicate their lives to contemplation, study, and ethical living, embodying the ideal of peace. However, Buddhist teachings also stress that lay people - those engaged in secular life - have an equally crucial role to play in the cultivation of peace. The balance between monastic and lay life is essential to the realization of both personal and collective peace. The fourfold assembly is a true Buddhist community, this cannot be undermined. Collaboration and partnerships can improve accessibility and innovation for all groups concerned with social welfare and sustainability development.

Monks and nuns are seen as the spiritual guides who lead by example, but it is the lay community that creates the foundation for societal peace. In Buddhism, spiritual practice is not confined to monasteries; it is meant to be integrated into everyday life. The lay community is encouraged to live ethically, practice mindfulness, and cultivate compassion in their daily interactions. This helps create a harmonious society, where peace is not just an ideal but a living, breathing reality.

Thich Nhat Hanh's philosophy of *Engaged Buddhism* underscores this integration of monastic wisdom into the lay world. His teachings emphasize that meditation and mindfulness can be practiced not only in the monastery but in the hustle and bustle of everyday life - whether in the marketplace, in the home, or at work. He teaches that peace can be found in every action, from cooking to driving to talking with loved ones. The engagement of lay people in this process ensures that peace is not a rarefied or abstract concept but something that is lived out in tangible ways in society⁴⁹.

In the global context, this dynamic between monastics and laypeople highlights the importance of grassroots efforts in promoting peace. While global leaders may engage in high-level diplomacy, it is the ordinary people, grounded in Buddhist principles, who can influence communities and, through collective action, drive large-scale social change. Buddhist teachings encourage the practice of non-violence, compassion, and wisdom at every level of society, from the individual to the collective, thereby fostering an environment where peace can flourish.

⁴⁸ Bukiet, Miles G. (2018): 267. *Monasteries of the Future*. The author considered that collaborations and partnerships for the contemplative adept are paramount. The monasteries of the future should be: "Monasteries of the Future are modern institutions, both secular and religious, designed to provide the requisite financial, social, intellectual, and instructional support necessary to train a new generation of contemplative adepts."

⁴⁹ Soma Thera, (1998): 180. 'In his "Friendly Letter," Nagarjuna says: "The Happy One (Sugata) said that the only way to be walked on is mindfulness directed bodywards; therefore, keep to it resolutely; for if mindfulness is lacking, all good Dhamma) decays.' And Santideva in his Bodhicaryavatara says: "If the mind, the tuskier maddened with passion, is bound completely with the rope of mindfulness, then, all perils disappear, and all blessings come into being."

V. BUDDHIST VIEWS ON CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL OF GLOBAL PEACE

Buddhism offers profound insights into the nature of peace, both on a personal and global scale. Its ethical teachings, rooted in non-violence, compassion, and interdependence, present a framework that can address many of the challenges humanity faces in the pursuit of peace. This section examines the Buddhist perspectives (Bawa, 2024) on the potential and challenges of global peace, considering both the philosophical underpinnings and practical applications of Buddhist teachings in a contemporary, globalized context.

5.1. Right Action and Social Justice

Buddhism emphasizes the importance of *Right Action* as part of the Eightfold Path⁵⁰. This ethical principle is not just about avoiding harm (*Ahiṃsā*) but about actively promoting social justice and compassion in the world. For both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, *Right Action* involves standing up against injustice, alleviating suffering, and fostering a society grounded in compassion and equality.

Engaged Buddhism, a movement championed by Thich Nhat Hanh, exemplifies how Buddhist teachings can be applied directly to social issues such as poverty, war, and environmental degradation. Nhat Hanh teaches that individuals should not retreat from the world but engage with it in a mindful and compassionate way, working toward a more just and peaceful society. His emphasis on the interconnectedness of all beings leads to a deep understanding that social injustice anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere.

The Dalai Lama shares this view, emphasizing that *Right Action* includes advocating for human rights, supporting the protection of the environment, and working toward the alleviation of suffering. His focus on compassion and nonviolence provides a moral framework for addressing the global challenges of our time.

5.1.1. Non-Violence (*Ahiṃsā*): The Heart of Buddhist Philosophy

At the heart of Buddhist philosophy lies the fundamental principle of *Ahiṃsā*, or non-violence. This concept extends far beyond the individual's personal conduct, encompassing not only actions but also speech and thoughts. *Ahiṃsā* represents the practice of refraining from causing harm to any living being, emphasizing kindness, compassion, and the cultivation of

⁵⁰ Eightfold path as part of the Bojjhanga Samyutta is widely practiced by Buddhists from all traditions. Piyadassi Thera (2006). Bodhi Bhikkhu, (1999): 98. *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. I. The Way to the End of Suffering, II. Right View, III. Right Intentions, IV. Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, V. Right Effort, VI. Right Mindfulness, VII. Right Concentration, VIII. The Development of Wisdom

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment. As noted, the mindfulness is one of the crucial factors in the seven factors: The seven factors are: 1. Mindfulness (*sati*), 2. Keen investigation of the dhamma (*dhammavicaya*), 3. Energy (*virīya*), 4. Rapture or happiness (*pīti*), 5. Calm (*passaddhi*), 6. Concentration (*samādhi*), 7. Equanimity (*upekkha*).

peace. This commitment to non-violence is central to how Buddhism views its role in global peace-building efforts.

In the realm of global politics and international relations, Buddhist teachings on non-violence could serve as a guiding principle for peaceful diplomacy and conflict resolution. The idea that every action – whether at an individual, community, or state level—has a profound impact on the interconnected web of existence encourages leaders to approach conflicts with a mind of compassion and understanding. By adopting a non-violent approach, not only in military or diplomatic strategies but in communication and decision-making processes, Buddhist ideals can inspire more thoughtful and compassionate foreign policies.

For example, the Dalai Lama’s teachings advocate for a “middle way” in resolving conflicts, suggesting that rather than resorting to violence or coercion, governments should prioritize peaceful negotiations, dialogue, and empathy. This approach not only challenges traditional methods of conflict resolution, which often emphasize power dynamics and control, but also highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict—such as inequality, injustice, and lack of understanding.

Furthermore, Buddhist non-violence extends into environmental ethics. The ecological crises facing the world today - climate change, resource depletion, and environmental destruction - are often fueled by exploitation and violence toward the planet. Buddhist teachings on non-violence encourage reverence for all forms of life, fostering a mindset that seeks to protect and preserve the environment for future generations. The Buddhist principle of *Ahimsā* advocates for the ethical treatment of nature, seeing human beings as part of a larger ecosystem, whose health is interconnected with the health of the earth.

5.1.2. Engaged Buddhism

Engaged Buddhism is a modern movement within Buddhism that applies Buddhist teachings to social, political, and environmental activism. Figures like Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama have been at the forefront of this movement, which bridges the gap between personal spiritual practice and social action. Engaged Buddhism asserts that personal transformation is not sufficient on its own; it must be accompanied by concrete actions aimed at creating a more just and peaceful world.

For example, Thich Nhat Hanh’s work during the Vietnam War, his advocacy for environmental sustainability, and his promotion of interfaith dialogue all exemplify the principles of Engaged Buddhism. Similarly, the Dalai Lama’s involvement in global peace movements, his leadership in advocating for human rights and environmental protection, and his calls for global disarmament all reflect his belief that social action is an essential component of Buddhist practice.

5.2. Mindfulness and Conflict Resolution

Mindfulness, as a practice of cultivating awareness and presence, plays a crucial role in conflict resolution. Both Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama see

mindfulness as a means of addressing global conflicts - whether personal, societal, or international. In their view, mindfulness is a tool for individuals to respond to conflicts with a clear mind, free from impulsive reactions driven by fear, anger, or misunderstanding. This mindful response allows individuals to approach conflicts with compassion, wisdom, and a deeper understanding of interdependence, which leads to nonviolent solutions.

In his book *Peace Is Every Step*, Nhat Hanh teaches that mindfulness can transform personal anger and societal violence. By cultivating awareness in our daily lives—whether in walking, breathing, or speaking - we can reduce the tendency to react defensively or aggressively in difficult situations. Mindfulness helps individuals pause, reflect, and respond to challenges with a peaceful, nonviolent mind.

Similarly, the Dalai Lama speaks of the importance of patience and calm in the face of adversity. In his teachings, he underscores that true peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to face conflict with calmness and compassion. For him, mindfulness is a tool that allows individuals to engage with conflict from a place of clarity and wisdom rather than from a place of reactivity or aggression.

VI. THE PATH TOWARD GLOBAL PEACE

6.1. Buddhist Meditation and Global Peace: Theoretical Underpinnings

Buddhist meditation is deeply intertwined with the philosophical underpinnings of nonviolence, compassion, and interdependence. Concepts such as *Anatta* (non-self), *Anicca* (impermanence), and *Pratītyasamutpāda* (interdependence) provide a theoretical basis for how meditation can lead to global peace. Meditation practices such as *Vipassanā* and *Mettā* meditation foster understanding of these concepts, encouraging individuals to transcend ego, reduce anger, and cultivate compassion, which can then ripple out into societal transformation.

Research in modern psychology supports the idea that meditation reduces stress, anxiety, and aggression, providing evidence for the transformative potential of these practices in both personal and societal contexts. Meditation offers a path to peace (Juichiro, 2016) that not only benefits individuals but also has the potential to transform societal violence into cooperation and mutual respect.

6.2. Meditative Practices and Their Role in Cultivation

6.2.1. The Role of Meditation and Compassionate Action

Meditation is central to both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh's practices and their understanding of peace. By fostering inner peace through meditation, individuals are better equipped to engage with the world in a compassionate and constructive way. Nhat Hanh's teachings on meditation and mindfulness emphasize how these practices contribute to both personal and global transformation. Similarly, the Dalai Lama teaches that meditation helps individuals develop the clarity and wisdom needed to act compassionately in the world.

Collective meditation movements and global initiatives inspired by their teachings, such as mindfulness practices, peace-building efforts, and social justice activism, are all examples of how Buddhist practices can contribute to global peace.

6.2.2. Meditation as a Tool for Inner Peace

Meditation, particularly *Vipassanā* (insight meditation) and *Samatha* (calm-abiding meditation), plays a crucial role in cultivating the mental clarity and emotional stability necessary for inner peace. Both Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama advocate meditation as a way to quiet the mind, regulate emotions, and gain insight into the nature of suffering. Through meditation, individuals can develop the mental discipline needed to respond to external challenges with equanimity.

6.2.3. The Role of Silence and Stillness

Silence and stillness are integral to Buddhist meditation practices. These moments of inner quiet allow practitioners to cultivate equanimity, which is essential for addressing the distractions and tensions of modern life. By embracing stillness, individuals can develop a sense of inner peace that transcends the chaos of the external world, leading to a greater capacity for compassionate action.

6.2.4. Global Meditation Movements: Collective Mindfulness for Peace

Global meditation movements such as *World Peace Meditation* (Volodin, 2023) and collective mindfulness practices, exemplify how Buddhist meditation can become a tool for global peace. These initiatives bring together people from diverse cultural and spiritual backgrounds, inviting them to engage in collective practices aimed at fostering inner peace, harmony, and compassion on a global scale.

By participating in global meditation events, individuals are reminded of their shared humanity and interconnectedness, helping to break down barriers of division and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for the well-being of the planet and all its inhabitants. These movements, often supported by organizations like the Dalai Lama's Foundation for Universal Responsibility, demonstrate the potential of Buddhist meditation to unite people worldwide in their common quest for peace.

6.3. Buddhism as a Global Framework for Peace: The Role of Meditation in Fostering Global Peace

Buddhism, with its universal appeal and ethical teachings, has the potential to serve as a global framework for peace. Its values of compassion, mindfulness, and interdependence provide a common moral language for addressing the most pressing global challenges, from human rights and sustainable development to climate justice and interfaith harmony.

6.3.1. Buddhism and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Buddhism's focus on inner peace, ethical conduct, and interdependence

aligns closely with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the SDGs related to peace, justice, and strong institutions (Goal 16) can be enriched by Buddhist teachings on non-violence, compassion, and the interconnectedness of all life.

The Dalai Lama has been a strong proponent of secular ethics - an approach that, while deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy, is accessible to people of all faiths or none. This inclusive ethical framework is aligned with the UN's vision of a world based on respect for human dignity, equality, and the alleviation of poverty and suffering. Buddhist principles of compassion, non-violence, and mindfulness can support efforts to create peaceful societies, uphold human rights, and promote justice.

In addition to contributing to peacebuilding, Buddhism can help address other SDGs, such as those focused on reducing inequalities (Goal 10) and fostering sustainable communities (Goal 11). By cultivating mindfulness and compassion, individuals and societies can become more attuned to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations, thereby helping to reduce inequality and foster more equitable communities.

6.3.2. Practical Steps for Global Peace

Both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh advocate for practical steps that individuals and organizations can take to contribute to global peace. These steps include:

i. Mindfulness Practices: Encouraging individuals to practice mindfulness in daily life, fostering awareness and compassion in their interactions with others. This leads to less reactive, more thoughtful responses to conflict.

ii. Dialogue and Understanding: Both leaders emphasize the importance of dialogue as a means of resolving conflicts. Whether it is interfaith dialogue, peace talks, or discussions aimed at resolving political disputes, they stress the importance of open communication and understanding.

iii. Social Activism: Engaging in activities that promote social justice, environmental sustainability, and the alleviation of suffering. Both the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh highlight the importance of action in addressing systemic problems such as poverty, inequality, and ecological destruction.

6.3.3. A Common Moral Language for Global Dialogue

One of the unique contributions Buddhism can offer to global peace efforts is its ability to provide a shared ethical framework that transcends religious, cultural, and national boundaries. Buddhism's teachings on compassion and non-violence align closely with international human rights principles, emphasizing the dignity and equality of all people. In a world that is increasingly divided by ideological, political, and religious differences, Buddhist ethics provide a unifying language for dialogue, encouraging empathy and mutual understanding across cultures.

For example, Buddhist ideas can inform global conversations about human rights by promoting the idea that all human beings, regardless of background, deserve to live with dignity and freedom from suffering. The Dalai Lama's

advocacy for secular ethics, which is grounded in the universal values of compassion and altruism, aligns with the United Nations' goals for human dignity and world peace. His emphasis on the importance of compassion in addressing global challenges resonates with the SDGs, particularly in areas such as peace, justice, and environmental sustainability.

Buddhism's principles also offer guidance in addressing some of the most urgent global crises, including climate change and ecological destruction. By emphasizing the interdependence of all beings and the interconnectedness of human life with the natural world, Buddhist teachings encourage a holistic view of global peace—one that integrates human well-being with environmental stewardship. This approach aligns with global movements for climate justice, where the goal is not just to protect the environment but to ensure that the rights and well-being of vulnerable communities are prioritized in the face of climate change.

6.3.4. Cultural and Political Obstacles to Buddhist Approaches in Global Peace-Building

Despite its many strengths, the application of Buddhist teachings in global politics faces several obstacles. One of the primary challenges is cultural resistance, as many countries may view Buddhist approaches to peace-building as incompatible with their political or cultural traditions. In regions where political and military power structures are entrenched, Buddhist ideals of non-violence and compassionate action may be seen as naive or impractical.

Another challenge lies in the potential for political agendas to exploit Buddhist teachings for non-peaceful ends. In some contexts, political leaders may use the symbolic power of Buddhism to further their own nationalistic or militaristic agendas, thereby distorting the true spirit of Buddhist teachings.

Additionally, there are misunderstandings about Buddhism's role in political life. While Buddhism advocates for non-violence and compassion, it does not advocate for passivity or inaction in the face of injustice. Buddhist leaders like the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh have made it clear that their commitment to peace is not about avoidance or detachment but about engaging actively and ethically with the world's suffering in order to alleviate it.

6.3.5. Integration into Global Discourses: A Framework for Interfaith Dialogue

Buddhism's universal principles offer a valuable contribution to interfaith dialogue and global peace-building. By emphasizing the shared human experience of suffering and the need for compassion and understanding, Buddhism fosters a common ground for dialogue between different faith traditions. Buddhist teachings on mindfulness, compassion, and interdependence resonate with many of the values promoted by other world religions, making Buddhism an effective model for fostering interfaith cooperation and mutual respect.

In conclusion, while there are challenges in integrating Buddhist teachings into global political and cultural frameworks, the potential for Buddhism to

serve as a foundation for global peace remains significant. By promoting non-violence, ethical living, and mindfulness, Buddhism provides a comprehensive and inclusive framework that can contribute to the realization of peace on both a personal and global scale.

VII. CONCLUSION

The contributions of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh to global peace are profound, offering both philosophical insight and practical strategies for overcoming the challenges that humanity faces today. Both figures have left an indelible mark on the global consciousness by integrating core Buddhist values - compassion, wisdom, and nonviolence—into their work and actions. These values are not only the foundation of Buddhist practice but also represent transformative forces capable of addressing both personal and global crises. The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh have illustrated that Buddhist mental cultivation, particularly through mindfulness and contemplation, serves as a powerful tool not only for individual serenity but also as a vehicle for social transformation. This fusion of internal peace and external action demonstrates that meditation, rather than being a mere form of personal retreat, can be a catalyst for global peace.

At the heart of both the Dalai Lama's and Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings is the conviction that the cultivation of inner peace is inseparable from the broader goal of societal harmony. In the Dalai Lama's approach, compassion is central to all forms of engagement, from the individual to the global level. His advocacy for nonviolence in resolving conflict is grounded in the belief that compassion - recognizing the shared humanity of all individuals—has the power to dissolve the barriers of hate, fear, and division that fuel violence. This approach is not passive or idealistic; it is an active form of engagement that calls on individuals and nations to adopt attitudes of empathy and understanding in their interactions. The Dalai Lama's stance on compassion is not just a personal moral guideline; it is a framework for societal reconciliation and international diplomacy, urging us to prioritize human dignity and well-being in all spheres of life.

Thich Nhat Hanh, on the other hand, presents a complementary approach through the concept of engaged Buddhism, which emphasizes the integration of mindfulness and Buddhist values into everyday actions. His philosophy is grounded in the recognition of interconnectedness, which encourages individuals to be mindful of the impact their actions, thoughts, and words have on others. For Thich Nhat Hanh, peace is not a distant goal but a continuous process of cultivating awareness in every moment, especially in the most mundane aspects of life. His teachings underscore the transformative power of mindfulness as a means of social change, demonstrating that peace is not only cultivated through meditation but also through conscious living. This engaged approach makes Buddhism particularly relevant in a modern context, where global challenges such as climate change, economic disparity, and political conflict demand immediate action and deep reflection.

The synthesis of the Dalai Lama's and Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings provides a holistic model for peacebuilding that spans both the personal and collective

realms. Whereas the Dalai Lama emphasizes the need for global compassion and moral leadership to resolve international conflicts, Thich Nhat Hanh offers practical guidance for individuals seeking to bring mindfulness into their daily lives. Together, these two figures exemplify how Buddhist teachings are not only relevant to the personal journey of spiritual development but also to the broader efforts required to heal the fractures within society. In this sense, their teachings offer complementary paths: one focused on the cultivation of compassion as the driving force for peace on a global scale, the other highlighting the role of individual mindfulness and interconnectedness as the foundation for personal transformation that, in turn, contributes to collective well-being.

One of the most significant aspects of their work is the emphasis on interconnectedness - the idea that all beings are intrinsically linked and that the suffering of one is the suffering of all. This insight is not merely an abstract philosophical concept but a practical call to action. By recognizing our interconnectedness, the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh urge us to consider how our actions affect not just ourselves, but also others and the environment. The acknowledgment of this interconnectedness is central to their respective teachings on global peace. The Dalai Lama's efforts toward interfaith dialogue and the promotion of human rights, alongside Thich Nhat Hanh's advocacy for environmental sustainability and social justice, both highlight how the recognition of shared humanity and shared responsibility can shape positive change. It is a call for individuals and communities to work together, transcending political, religious, and cultural boundaries, in the pursuit of a just and peaceful world.

Moreover, in the context of today's increasingly polarized world, the teachings of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh are not only relevant - they are essential. In an age of rising nationalism, environmental degradation, and social fragmentation, their messages offer a timely and urgent reminder that peace cannot be achieved through isolationism or divisive rhetoric. On the contrary, peace requires collaboration, mutual understanding, and a commitment to the collective good. As such, the teachings of these two leaders transcend religious boundaries, offering universal wisdom that can inspire individuals from all walks of life to engage in the work of peacebuilding. The core values of compassion, mindfulness, and nonviolence are not confined to a specific religious tradition; they are principles that resonate deeply with people across different cultures and belief systems, providing a common ground for dialogue and cooperation.

The concept of engaged Buddhism, as articulated by Thich Nhat Hanh, also holds particular significance in this context. Engaged Buddhism encourages individuals to take concrete steps to alleviate suffering, whether through community activism, environmental stewardship, or social advocacy. It calls on practitioners to integrate Buddhist teachings into all aspects of their lives, transforming their awareness into actionable compassion. This principle is especially pertinent as global crises, such as climate change and widespread

inequality, demand not only individual transformation but collective action. Thich Nhat Hanh's emphasis on mindfulness as a tool for social change highlights the potential for Buddhist practices to influence both personal attitudes and public policies in ways that contribute to the common good.

In conclusion, the teachings of the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh offer not only a philosophical blueprint for peace but also a practical guide for navigating the complexities of the modern world. By cultivating inner peace through meditation and mindfulness, individuals can contribute to a more harmonious world. By applying the values of compassion, wisdom, and nonviolence to societal structures, we can address the root causes of conflict and work toward a more just and compassionate global order. In a world increasingly divided by ideological, cultural, and political differences, the teachings of these Buddhist leaders serve as a powerful reminder that peace begins with the self but must extend outward in action to heal the world. As we face unprecedented global challenges, the timeless wisdom of Buddhism offers a clear and actionable path forward - a call to action that is as relevant today as it has ever been.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

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Abstract:

Peace is twofold: outer peace and inner peace. The outer peace is such satisfaction in external objects such as a positive lifestyle, enjoyment of sensual pleasures, etc. Apart from outer peace, the meaning of inner peace is freedom from suffering. Without disturbance, torture, violence, and pain, the meditator stays calmly and in tranquility. With respect to Buddhist Literature translates inner peace as a wholesome mental factor that relies on the mind. Inner peace is an essential part of human life. Just as a gardener plants the seeds to grow its flowers and fruits, so too the seeker who desires to experience the inner peace has to cause inner peace to grow.

The way to gain outer peace is much easier than to grow the inner peace. Because the worldlings are busier focusing on the physical building rather than mental cultivation, let the mind wander freely to the sensual objects that is why it is hard to cause inner peace to grow. Then, how does the inner peace grow? By what methods should the seekers follow? What kinds of benefits of the cultivation of inner peace to human life? Without causing the growth of inner peace, what are the disadvantages? Since the appearance of the Buddha Dispensation in the world, with the greatest loving kindness and forbearance to all living beings, he has guided the beings to the path where the priceless treasures are. Hence, for this reason, the writer would declare the Buddha's techniques using primary sources and its relevant secondary source to fulfill the curiosity of the inner peace seekers in the world.

Keywords: *Comprehension, inner peace, purification of mind, right effort, right view.*

I. INTRODUCTION

None does not wish peace. But for certain people, peace is beyond their expectations. Generally, peace in the world has two types: inner peace and outer peace. Inner peace is divided into two sub-groups: ordinary peace and extraordinary peace. When mankind is comfortable with things such as seeing,

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hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking, it is called ordinary inner peace. Having discovered the balance and harmony in mind, someone gets the inner peace. For example, one who sees the pleasant vision, feels peaceful. But the pleasant vision is not long lasting because the eyes may see good or bad forms. Sometimes either being pleasant or unpleasant, it depends on one's attitude. In the case of smiling, one does not know how to do. Because of the selfishness, most people are chaotic to their objects.

Nobody can control the mind at good side forever, in the same way the good result will not appear in them. The ordinary peace is like a bubble floating in the air. The bubble will disappear when it loses its air momentum. Meanwhile, the extraordinary peace is overcoming all sufferings, it never returns to the sensual world. In addition, the causality law works as really as it is for every being. When the mind connects to the object, a person can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think. While doing good deeds with the best and predominant mental stages, a person can get incomparable inner peace since the previous consciousness and associated with mental states, a serial cognitive process appears. one can change, stop and create the serial cognitive process to be better.

Whatever deeds had been done in the past one gets the effect as its cause. It is the nature of causality law. The quality of inner peace and outer peace cannot be compared because it is too far. But without outer peace, inner peace does not arise. So, they support each other. The Lord Buddha is the greatest omniscient being who had fulfilled the perfections. Due to intelligent mindfulness, one who has done good deeds may enjoy true inner peace to attain the final goal.

II. MAIN DISCUSSION

Most people in the world come to question, "What is the meaning of cultivating inner peace?" "How should they cultivate it?" "What benefits will they get by cultivating it?" How many kinds of it by means of references?" "How does the Buddha instruct the way of peace?" The writer illustrates how to grow the best fruit. To grow the best fruit, at first a gardener has to plant the seed. It needs a proper land that has fertilized soil, enough sunlight, and water. To protect from danger, the gardener has to build a fence around and cover it with a net to avoid the insects. By caring for all these things, the seed will grow up to become flowers and to produce fruits. In another fact, if the gardener has the seed but he does not care for the seeds well, it will not grow as his wish and the seed will not produce the best fruits.

2.1. Definition

The meaning of peace is to be free from suffering. Without disturbance, torture, violence and pain, the meditator stays calm and in tranquility, it is called peace. Peace means a characteristic of thing. Peace or in Pāli *santi*. The *santi* has three types are *iccanta santi*, *tadanga santi* and *sammuti santi*.¹

The first type, *iccanta santi* means *Nibbāna* because it extinguished all defilements (*kilesā*). The term *iccanta* means overcoming the death. After

¹ Mahaniddesapali, p. 57.

realizing the *Nibbāna*, the Arahant will not be reborn in any existences, is deathless. Because of extinguishing all defilements, he is completed free from all sufferings. Because of being free from all sufferings, the meditator attains real peace which is never changing. Without stopping the suffering, none is called *iccanta santi*. After standing on the final *Nibbāna*, the meditator attained the real peace and realized the end of the suffering. As recommendation of the *iccanta santi*; another terms are mentioned in the Commentary of Abhidhamma: *santi lakkhanam, nirodha saccam, issuti rassam, animitta paccupatthanam*.² It means the characteristics of the *Nibbāna* is peace, deathless function, and knowing as signless for the meditators. After realizing the *Nibbāna*, the Noble person does not tremble due to any mental disturbance.

The second type, *tadanga santi* means temporary peace. It is unreal peace and not forever peace. The meditator may feel the peace while applying the absorption (*Jhāna*). The higher concentration has an ability to stop the defilements for a moment. If the meditator cannot maintain the concentration, all defilements will reappear as before he meditated. Although it is unreal final peace, but it is uneasy to reach. By developing concentration gradually, the meditator can reach each stage of *Jhāna*. The *tadanga santi* is also called inner peace but it does not have an ability to extinguish the defilements.

The third type, *sammuti santi* means a conventional truth which is used to communication. It is nothing the qualities of peace. In direct say, it relies on sixty-two kinds of wrong view such as by remembering many past lives, a person claims and believes that self to be eternal; by remembering one to ten contractions and expansion, a person believes the self of eternal; by remembering the forty periods of contractions and expansions, a person believes the self of eternal; by seeing beings rush around, circulate and re-arise, but this remains forever; by remembering the past life in a Brahma world where one was subject to more powerful Brahma and thus thinks in this existence that the more powerful Brahma is an eternal, all powerful Lords, creating or following a monotheist religion which is essentially wrong view, etc.

2.2. The benefits of cultivating inner peace

By referring the main three wrong views: the view of causeless, non-actively and wrong view, most people are blind faith without investigating and discussing with the learned person, as a result they hold wrong view. If the readers flash back those reasons, they also wish to be peaceful and look forward. In another case, when a person does not gain the four wheels, so there is no peace.

According to the *Cakka Sutta*,³ for the sake of others, the Buddha instructed his followers here and after, “Bhikkhus, there are these four wheels. When these four wheels turn, those devas and humans attain the greatness and the abundance of wealth soon. What four? 1) Dwelling in a suitable locality

² Abhidhamma Atthakathā, p. 79.

³ A. IV. 419.

(*Patirupadesavāsa*); 2) relying on the good person (*Sappurisasamseva*); 3) Right resolution (*Attasammāpanidhi*); and 4) Merit done in the past (*Pubbecakatapuññatā*).” These four things are interrelated of each other mutual. For instance, the engine of a car. The engine is illustrated as a driver, the wheel is like Dhamma. A good driver drives the car to the destination. In the same way, the Dhamma wheel gets the great inner peace in all directions. Among these four things, one cannot say that “this one is more important”.

People who dwell in improper places will lose benefits. Thus, the wise instructed the listeners to dwell in a suitable place where there are three benefits: merits, property, and good health. Yes, it is right that they must stay in some places to get one of the three benefits. They are as follows:

(1) The first benefit, dwelling in a suitable locality means that a person who delights in sensual pleasure might not possess real inner peace. Because he dwells in the improper place or he does not do self-investigation of behavior. Therefore, in order to accumulate welfare, he must dwell in some proper places and repeat the wholesome deeds many times.

(2) The second benefit, relying on a good person means a person has to rely on the noble one who is virtuous, concentration and wisdom. Associate with the wise is an important point. Accordance with the *Sevitabba Sutta*⁴ says that one has to serve respectfully, associates with and has to approach the noble one who has higher morality, concentration, and wisdom. Because of serving, associating with the Noble person, one who has not been perfect yet eagerly strives to gain a certain criterion of morality, concentration and wisdom.

(3) The third benefit, right resolution means to control oneself to do good deeds. The *Pāli attasammāpanidhi* is a combination of three words: *atta*, *samma* and *panidhi*. The term *atta* means oneself, *samma* means right, and *panidhi* means keeping or taking. After listening to the instruction of a Noble person, he practices properly as a reminder and determines it before acting to be better than before.

In this third benefit, the background of venerable Devadatta, who tried to injure the Buddha, and the schism of Order is taken as an example. During the appearance of the Lord Buddha is the best time to do good deeds. But a person who lacks self-confidence is in vain. Venerable Devadatta joined the monkhood with the other six candidates: Ānanda, Bagu, Kimila, Baddiya, Anuruddha, and Upāli, who was a slave or barber. After the ordination and listening to and practicing the Dhamma, Bagu, Kimila, and Baddiya became Arahants. Ānanda was only Sotapanna.⁵ Among them, except venerable Devadatta, all were Noble persons. He was very eager to be famous, so he tried to find a way to be famous, approached the prince *Ajātasatthu*, and convinced

⁴ A. III. 122.

⁵ Vi.4, p. 341.

him. He also tried to kill the Buddha three times: by sending the arrow men,⁶ by pushing a stone down,⁷ and by attacking the Buddha with an elephant.⁸ Then, he demanded five factors to the Buddha to disunite of *Sangha*.⁹

The monks have to stay in the forest for their whole lives.

The monks have to go alms round for their whole life.

The monks have to wear discarded robes for their whole lives.

The monks have to stay under the tree for their whole life

The monks have to eat only vegetables.

Venerable Devadatta tried to kill the Buddha again and again because of jealousy and wished to become the leader of *Sangha*. He did not know the right and the wrong or possible and impossible because of his avarice. He was a monk and formerly a prince in *Sakkyā* clan of king. In spite of his high knowledge, he created the schism. Why?

Because of selfishness, he had done many wrong deeds. In that case, the Buddha and the Community Order forbade him, but he did not listen. The Buddha taught the monks regarding the disunity of *Sangha*, what should be done, and the defect of that performance. The offence is the second heavy one; *Sanghabhedaka* means the disunity of *Sangha* in the rules of monks. But compared with karma, the *Sanghabhedaka* is the worst. It was the deep, wrong effort of venerable Devadatta because of inordinate greed. He wished the equal fame to the Buddha because he thought that he was in the same clan as the Buddha. As the former said that the Lord Buddha used his effort deeply to unite, but venerable Devadatta did in contrast.

Venerable *UPāli* asked the Buddha what is unity and disunity, which result will come to that person who did the disunity of *Sangha*. In that case, the Buddha took out the benefits of unity for *Sangha*.¹⁰ *the Sangha* is harmonious now dwelling at ease in concord, without disputes and with a single recitation. It is easy to attend to the Buddha's teachings and to resort to remote lodging in forest and jungle groves. According to venerable Devadatta, the Buddha said the verse thus;

“*Sukaram sādunā sādū, sādū pāpena dukkharam.*

Pāpam pāpena sukaram, pāpamariyehi dukkaram.”¹¹

It means easy to do good deeds for a noble person but difficult for a bad person. The scoundrel does evil easily, but not for noble persons. Here, the readers absolutely know that people try to enjoy happiness as much as they can. Without the guidance of a competent master, they will not walk on the

⁶ Vi.4, p. 351.

⁷ Vi.4, p. 354.

⁸ Vi.4, p. 356.

⁹ Vi.4, p. 358.

¹⁰ A.V. 712.

¹¹ A. V. 361.

right path. If one has a good leader, he knows absolutely what the right way is. Then, one should examine whether the mind is dear to doing good or not. By examining these two marks, he is able to decide who he is and what he is doing to experience inner peace.

The above evidence of venerable Devadatta is not only wrong doing but also urged the prince Ajātasatthu to take the throne of his father. The prince Ajātasatthu had done the cruel deed that killed his father, King Bimbisāra. He could not sleep and eat comfortably along nights.¹² After doing the worst deed with strong intentions, he felt stronger repentance. It is the law of *karma*. To cure it, Jīvaka, who was a royal physician, took him to the Buddha, asked about the result of monk or benefits of order.¹³ The Lord Buddha replied to him the benefits of Order completely, then he got the peace of mind and the real refuge of life. Soon after, he became a Buddhist follower. As an ordinary, he also supported the Order along his life span by holding the first synod of Buddha's teachings. According to the divine eye of the Buddha, the prince Ajātasatthu would be a king one day if he listened and followed the law of the royal palace. But he made the wrong choice to associate with venerable Devadatta, who planned to destroy his father.¹³

It could not be said that even if a person has completed good karma in the past life, if he always has bad intentions in the present, his past good karma was useless. Being human is very important to improve the quality of life. Some people lost their hopes because of misconduct in the current situation. Without the Buddha's teaching, nobody can know the way leading to the highest happiness.

(4) The fourth benefit, merit done in the past. Apart from the Buddha and some Arahants, nobody can see own karma in the past. By means of the *Tamotama Sutta*, the Buddha describes the four types of individuals are as follows:¹⁴

(1) One in darkness who is headed for darkness:

How is one in darkness who is headed for darkness? There is the case where a person was born in low class viz. the family of a scavenger, a hunter, a basketweaver, a wheelwright, or a sweeper a family that is poor, with little food or drink, living in hardship, where food and clothing are hard to come by. And he is ugly, misshapen, stunted and sick: half-blind or deformed or lame or crippled. He does not receive any gifts of food, drink, clothing, or vehicles; garlands, perfumes, or ointments; bedding, shelter, or lamps. He engages in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct and mental misconduct. Having engaged in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct and mental misconduct, he - on the break-up of the body,

¹² *Dī. Atthakathā*.1, p. 128.

¹² *Dī. Atthakathā*.1, p. 47.

¹³ *Dī. Atthakathā*.1, p. 124.

¹⁴ *AN* 4.85.

after death reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. This is the type of person in darkness who is headed for darkness.

(2) One in darkness who is headed for light:

How is one in darkness who is headed for light? There is the case where a person was born in lower class viz. the family of a scavenger, a hunter, a basket-weaver, a wheelwright, or a sweeper a family that is poor, with little food or drink, living in hardship, where food & clothing are hard to come by. And he is ugly, misshapen, stunted and sick: half-blind or deformed or lame or crippled. He does not receive any gifts of food, drink, clothing, or vehicles; garlands, perfumes, or ointments; bedding, shelter, or lamps. He engages in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct and good mental conduct. Having engaged in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct and good mental conduct, he on the break-up of the body, after death reappears in the good destination, the heavenly world. This is the type of person in darkness who is headed for light.

(3) One in light who is headed for darkness:

How is one the type of person in light who is headed for darkness? There is the case where a person was born in middle class - a noble warrior family, a priestly family, a prosperous householder family a family that is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions, with a great deal of money, a great many accoutrements of wealth, a great many commodities. And he is well-built, handsome, extremely inspiring, endowed with a lotus-like complexion. He receives gifts of food, drink, clothing and vehicles; garlands, perfumes and ointments; bedding, shelter and lamps. He engages in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct and mental misconduct. Having engaged in bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct and mental misconduct, he on the break-up of the body, after death reappears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. This is the type of person in light who is headed for darkness.

(4) One in light who is headed for light:

How is one the type of person in light who is headed for light? There is the case where a person was born in high class viz. a noble warrior family, a priestly family, a prosperous householder family a family that is rich, with much wealth, with many possessions, with a great deal of money, a great many accoutrements of wealth, a great many commodities. And he is well-built, handsome, extremely inspiring, endowed with a lotus-like complexion. He receives gifts of food, drink, clothing and vehicles; garlands, perfumes and ointments; bedding, shelter and lamps. He engages in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, and good mental conduct. Having engaged in good bodily conduct, good verbal conduct, and good mental conduct, he on the break-up of the body, after death, reappears in the good destination, the heavenly world. This is the type

of person in light who is headed for light. “These are the four types of people to be found existing in the world.”

By seeing these four types of individuals, the readers may know the one who has done merits in the past. Because of wrong view, people misunderstood the imitation of peace (*sammuti santi*) as the real peace.

Moreover, in the *Saddhamma Sutta*,¹⁵ the Buddha mentioned the ten kinds of Dhammas:

- (1) Abstaining from killing any living
- (2) Abstaining from stealing other things, that is, not giving
- (3) Abstaining from sexual misconduct
- (4) Abstaining from telling lies
- (5) Abstaining from slandering speech
- (6) Abstaining from rough speech
- (7) Abstaining from idle talk
- (8) Abstaining from covetousness
- (9) Abstaining from ill will
- (10) Abstaining from wrong views.

Those who follow the ten Dhammas are on the right track to gain inner peace in all directions. All directions are free from danger. In daily activities, these ten Dhammas are hard to be applied through bodily, verbal and thought. Nobody likes the bodily punishment, false speech, and ill will to treat others. With the bound of sympathy, one develops peace for the sake of oneself and the other living beings. So, human is the center point to do sympathy by thinking that “I do not like any bad deeds on me, also I do not do the bad deeds to others. As I am dear to do good deed, it is the same for others”.

2.3. The disadvantages without cultivating inner peace

People who dislike to train the mind may possess the unwholesome mental factors such as greed, hatred, envy, delusion, conceit, etc. Here, the writer would state the nine levels of conceit (*Māna*) are 1)¹⁶ for the one who has high conceit is of threefold level: I am higher than him, I am the same to him, I am lower than him; 2) for the middle conceit is also of threefold level: I am higher than him, I am the same to him, I am lower than him; 3) for the lower conceit is also of threefold level: I am higher than him, I am the same to him, I am lower than him. Conceit is unwholesome mental factor and definitely drags the doer to be reborn in the unhappy state or be reborn in lower family such as poverty.

Talking about conceit, only the Arahant who has reached the highest Path and Fruition is able to destroy all the mental defilements. The mental defilements are divided into two groups: lower group (*Arambhagiya*) and

¹⁵ AN 7.94.

¹⁶ AN 6. 80.

higher group (*Uddambāgiya*) as follows:¹⁷

The lower group has five kinds of defilements are *kamarāga*, *patigha*, *silabbataparāmasa*, *micchāditti* and *vicikicchā*. These five defilements which are the lust of sensual pleasure, anger, wrong conduct, wrong view and doubt able to

be destroyed by the three Lower Ariya persons.

The higher group has five kinds of defilements are *rūparāga*, *arūparāga*, *māna*, *uddacca* and *avijjā*. These five defilements which are the lust of *rūpabrahma*, *arūpabrahma*, conceit, restlessness and ignorance able to be released by an Arahant.

2.4. Types of individuals

The *Pāli Santa* means extinguishing from all defilement. The *Santa* is the quality of human being. According to *Pāli Myanmar Dictionary*¹⁸ said the meaning of *Sappurisa* is *santo purisāti sappurisa*. It means the one who is *santa* (peace) is also called *sappurisa*.

There are two kinds of individual:

- (1) The wise individual (*sappurisa*) and
- (2) The wicked individual (*asappurisa*).

Regarding *sappurisa*, the lord Buddha preached many discourses such as *Sappurisa Sutta*, *Sappurisdhamma Sutta* and *Sappurisdāna Sutta*.

The *Sappurisa sutta*¹⁹ instructed that the person who neither extol by getting any good things nor dispraise others is called *sappurisa*. The ability is very difficult to have, because of having peace mind the one has that good quality. In the same sutta also shows the sign of *asappurisa*. Indeed, wicked people desire to show their abilities such and they think that they are better than others, also like to blame others. They are called *asappurisa*.

The *Sappurisdhamma Sutta* in the *Mahavagga* of *Suttanta Pitaka* said that “the one who has right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration is called *sappurisa*. For the Noble eightfold path can be real peace, so, the one who has the Noble Eightfold Path is called *sappurisa*.”

In the *Anguttara Nikāya*,²⁰ the Lord Buddha shows the four qualities of a good person (*sappurisa*). What four?

- (1) To start with, a good person does not speak ill of another even when asked, let alone when not asked. But when led on by questions, he speaks ill of another without giving the full details, leaving many things out. This is the way to know a good person.

¹⁷ DN 33.....

¹⁸ *Pāli - Myanmar Dictionary*, p. 87.....

¹⁹ MN 113.

²⁰ A.IV. 45.

(2) Furthermore, a good person speaks pleasant words to another even when not asked, let alone when asked. But when led on by questions he speaks pleasant words of another in full detail, not leaving anything out. That is the way to know a good person.

(3) Furthermore, a good person speaks ill of oneself even when not asked, let alone when asked. But when led on by questions they speak ill of oneself in full detail, not leaving anything out. That is the way to know a good person.

(4) Furthermore, a good person does not speak pleasant words of oneself even when asked, let alone when not asked. But when led on by questions he speaks well of oneself without giving the full details, leaving many things out. That is the way to know a good person.

By reading this sutta, the readers know how to differentiate between good and bad persons.²¹ When speaking, most people extol themselves and press on others. But the wise refrains from extolling himself.

A good person is born in a family for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of the people. For the benefit, welfare, and happiness of mother and father; children and partners; bondservants, workers, and staff; friends and colleagues; and ascetics and Brahmins. Just as great rain cloud which nourishes all the crops for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of the people. In the same way, a good person is born in a family for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of the people. The one who has peace mind is a good person.²²

On account of trying for the both sides; oneself and others or here and hereafter, most people love and respect to the good person. For example, the Buddha. If the Buddha did not appear in the world, nobody knows the four noble truths. The quality of an individual is depending on how much knowledge that one knows.

Regarding to the knowledge, the Buddha guides his followers to know the four kinds of persons and to be the best one such as Bhikkhus, there are these four kinds of persons found existing in the world. What four?

- (1) One of little learning who is not intent on what he has learned;
- (2) One of little learning who is intent on what he has learned;
- (3) One of much learning who is not intent on what he has learned;
- (4) One of much learning who is intent on what he has learned.

Among these four persons, the last one that the Buddha praised because he has learned much – that is of the discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired utterances, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions and answers.

After learning what has been heard, he understood the meaning of what he has learned, having understood the Dhamma, he practices in accordance with

²¹ A. IV. 385.

²² A. V. 566.

the Dhamma. At the end of the dhammatalk, the Buddha praises the one, thus “*Devapinam pasamsati, Byanmunāpi pasamsito.*” It means even the devas praise such a one by Brahma too he is praised.²³ It is right, only bear in mind and reciting by heart, if he cannot follow the Dhamma as he has learnt, one cannot say that he is perfect. Although the one knows little Dhamma, he practices and realizes the Dhamma as he has learnt.

Aside of learning skill, the discussion with meditation masters who are competent is also important. The interview between meditation instructor and *yogi* is necessary thing that is to remove the doubt. The *yogi* must be honest what he or she has self-experienced.

Apart from remove the doubt, both sides gain the new knowledge and solution. Saying with pride is only in vain.

According to the Sattajātī Sutta, the Buddha replied the question of Pasenadi Kosala King thus, “*sanvāsena sīlam, sanvoharena soceyam, āpadāsu thāmo, sākiccāya paññā veditabbā.*” It means by staying the one can know the other’s morality and it needs for a long time, with intention and wisdom. Nobody knows the other within short time, without intention and wisdom. By saying thus, we know his purification with intention and wisdom.

Due to meet the danger, one knows one’s ability and takes time with intention and wisdom. Nobody knows each other within short time without intention and wisdom. By discussion, one knows his ability. Here, the discussion means both persons are knowledgeable.²⁴ It is right, the way to know about many things, we have to invest time with attention and wisdom. Having been perfected in the three qualities, one is able to live with each other.

Thus, the Buddha admonished the followers in the *Mangala Sutta* regard with the communication:

“*Asevanañca bālānam, panditānañca sevanā.*

Pujāca pujaneyānam etam mangalamuttamam.”²⁵

It means disassociation from the bad, association with the good and doing honor to the honorable. By following the three things, one will be perfect for all benefits. It is right that without good thinking person cannot be a good talker, without good thinking and talking, one will never be a good doer. To be a good thinker the one needs to have a good mind because the mind is the forerunner for three actions: mental action, verbal action, and bodily action. So the Buddha addressed in the *Dhammapada* Pāli verse, “*Manopubbangamā dhammā, mano setthā, mano mayā.*”²⁶

To clearly distinguish the bad and good persons, the Buddha guided the comparative *Balapadītha Sutta*,²⁷ “*Idha bhikkhave pandito sucintitacinti ca hoti,*

²³ A. IV. 394.

²⁴ *Sam*, p. 78.

²⁵ *Kp* 5.

²⁶ *Dhammapada*, p. 1.

²⁷ *M*. III. 201.

subhāsita bhāsi ca hoti, sukagata kammakāri ca hoti." It means here, monks, the wise are prone to think well, speak well. By thinking for him and others, to be good benefits for him and others, for present and later. Not only by thinking but also speaking and doing the one act all actions in good deeds.

III. THE METHODS OF CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

According to the *Anuggahita Sutta*²⁸ mentions the methods of cultivating inner peace in a parable of a sweet fruit which has fragrance. Every frantic action is such kind of worry. Because of anxiety, people never get outer and inner peace. The way to gain the result of peace is one has to plant the great quality seed of peace. It can be illustrated as sweet fruit and flower which have fragrance. If a person wants to take the fruits and flowers, he should plant the best seed. By fertilizing the best seed, he is able to enjoy the sweet fruits and flowers. Similarly, the inner peace depends on well mind, it needs to be planted on right season. It is harder to experience rather than the outer peace which is seen upon the others' property.

The Buddha always encourages the disciples to practice in systematic method which is named the Noble Eightfold Path. This Noble Path is divided into three levels of training as follows:

- (1) Basic training or morality involved right speech, right action and right livelihood;
- (2) Middle training or concentration involved right effort, right concentration and right mindfulness;
- (3) Higher training or wisdom involved right view and the right thought.

According to the Buddhist theory, these three levels are shown. But in fact, the order would be quite different. At first, the practitioner must straighten the false mindset into the right view. The right view in Buddhism is an excessive significant basic factor before going forward, it plays a prominent role for further training. The next practice is right action, which is under virtue. Virtue is the preparation of the meditator before beginning the meditation because without being virtuous, the meditator will find it hard to concentrate. Then, the further step is to purify the mind or right concentration with right effort and the last as well as the highest course is right mindfulness. The writer will examine these three types of training in detail in the next section.

3.1. Right view

The above illustration makes someone or environment to realize the genuine ultimate happiness. In *Pāli Sammāditthi* means right view. According to Literature, there are six types of *Sammāditthi* (Right View) such as *Kammassakatā Sammāditthi*, *Jhāna Sammāditthi*, *Vipassanā Sammāditthi*, *Magga Sammāditthi*, *Phala Sammā ditthi*.²⁹

Kammassakata Sammāditthi means doing good behaves and believing

²⁸ A.V.17

²⁹ A. I. 369; A. II. 63

on the Buddha, Dhamma, sangha and right view on the kamma.

Jhāna Sammāditthi means right view on the Jhāna consciousness or concentration.

Vipassanā Sammāditthi means right view or clear understanding on the mind and matters.

Magga Sammāditthi means right view on the path (*Magga*).

Phala Sammā ditthi means right view on the fruitions (*Phala*).

Among them, the first one is the most important for everyone who searches the inner peace. Knowing the right way whosoever can get the right benefits. The first one is knowing about *Kamma* without doubt on anything. How the one believes on the kamma in right way; if one does the good deeds, he or she will be good result and If the one does the bad deeds, he or she will be bad results. Going on the right way whether wrong the one believes its results as he did. Regarding the *Kammassakata Sammāditthi*, one must believe not only in the *Kamma*, but also in the Buddha, Dhamma, and *Sangha*.

Because of the Buddha, we know the Dhamma and *Sangha*. Without the Buddha and his disciples (*Sangha*) who are lineage on the right way, we cannot see and know the right way. On the other hand, the one who wants inner peace without knowing the right way, cannot cultivate the inner peace. So, the one who cultivates inner peace must run the five ways as a planter or gardener. The one who plants a plant that is flowers and fruit in the soil land. He must take care of plants by doing five works: fencing, watering, doing weed out, clear of insects and clearing the net of insects. On account of doing the five manners on his plant, the one will get the fruits and flowers as he wishes. So too, the one who plants the right view and wants to be at inner peace have to rub the five things: virtues, knowledge, discussing, concentration and insight meditation according to *Anuggahita Sutta* of *Anguttara nikāya* chapter 5.

3.2. Right action

Right action or virtue is restraining from killing living beings, stealing the anything that is not giving others' things, sexual misconduct, telling a lie and taking drugs and intoxicant. To have a better result, accordance with the teaching of the Buddha; controlling on the six senses doors (*Indriyasamvaraṇīla*), good livelihood (*Ājivaparisuddhisīla*) and contemplation while using four needed things; clothes, food; dwelling and medicines (*paccayasannissitasīla*).

The meditators must observe at least basic five precepts. If he or she can observe the eight precepts, it is better. By observing eight precepts, one can purify his deeds and speech and is easy to concentrate. According to *Abhidhammatthasangaha*, *sīlavisuddhi* means there are four types purified of *Sīla*.³⁰

Pātimokkhasamvarasīla - virtue regarding restraint according to the *Pātimokkha*. For monk according to *Pātimokkha*, for laypeople at least five

³⁰ A. I. 347.

precept or eight precepts. Morality is foundation of insight meditation and an essential thing. If one wants to practice insight meditation should observe morality.

Indariyasamvarasīla - virtue regarding restraint of the sense faculties. While seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking, the meditator must note with mindfulness the object as it is, and shouldn't follow the objects. For example, if yogi sees any vision, he must note and contemplate it only seeing, seeing. The yogis should not think by following the vision, while seeing must note it clearly.

Ājivapārisuddhi sīla - virtue consisting in purity of livelihood. If a meditator observes clearly the morality, his livelihood will be purified his livelihood. Dealing with living for food, wearing, dwelling, and medicines, one should not commit the five precepts.

- *Paccayasannissitasīla* – virtue connected with the use of the requisites. While practicing insight meditation the one should consider or ponder the reason for the use of things, clothes, food, buildings, and medicine, to remove attachment and pride. To get the suitable benefits from them, to protect the badness and to follow the teaching of the Buddha. These four things are needed for a living being. While anyone using them, they hope to be unsuitable effects regarding with sensual pleasures. When monks and meditators are using them, they should not hope like a sensual human people. Monks and meditators should hope for suitable results.

3.3. Right effort

For the striving person, everything is ready. Therefore, there is a saying that says, “*Vīriyavato kim nāma na sījjati.*”³¹ It means the one who has pure hope can succeed. There are four types of predominates: wish, effort, mind, and wisdom. The one who has any kind of predominate can be successful and famous in all directions. According to Abhidhamma, among the four the predominates if one predominates others three follow the one. For example, if the wishing (*chanda*) predominates the other three things, *vīriya*, *citta*, and wisdom are following to wish.

In the *Mahasātipatthānasutta*,³² the Lord Buddha instructed to practice meditation for meditator by using main three words in *Pāli*: *ātapi*, *sampajāno* and *satimā*. Among the three, *ātapi* means right effort. The Buddha highlights the four characteristics of *Vīriya*:³³

(1) To get rid of the unwholesome states which have arisen,

When one is trying to get some things, the one should get rid of other things. It is natural way that we need opposite side things. Only by destroying the cover, we can get the benefits and essence of life. It is very rare to be paragon of virtue for one who is beginner for mature of morality. On seeing the bad

³¹ *Pañcapakarana Anutika*, p. 233.

³² *DN 22*.

³³ *A. IV. 402*.

result and ruin of deeds one strives to destroy the causes of bad deeds that have arisen. After doing any deeds by body and speech, the one's qualities of deeds never lose. But by doing good deeds with body and speech, the qualities of good deed are able to overcome them.

(2) To protect the unwholesome states which not yet arisen,

Some people associate with unwholesome deeds by themselves but they don't want to get the result of it. Nobody wants to feel worry distasteful by weeping. The purpose of doing bad deeds is heedless. Therefore, if one does the bad deeds by mistaking, he is aware not to do it again and again, because the doing bad deeds again and again is increasing of suffering. The Buddha said the verse to protect the person who is doing the bad deed repeatedly:

"Pāpañce puriso kariyā na nam kiriya punappunam.

*Na tam chandam kayirātha dukkho pāpassa uccayo."*³⁴

It means if a person commits the evil, he should not do it again and again. He should not find pleasure therein: painful is the accumulation of evil. If the door is closed strictly any danger cannot come into the house. Similarly, the one protects the six doors namely eye, ear, nose, mouth, body and mind to prevent any defilement such as greed, anger and delusion etc. Before coming one should protect any sin. So, the saying is very famous in the world: protecting is better than cure. The method of protecting is very useful and simple for one because of experience. For the one who lack of knowing how can he protect it? One who has experience can do it clearly. After removing, and protecting the defilements one's mind wants to do good deeds as much as it can. Regarding the protection, the Buddha urged his followers with the verse:³⁵

"Anupubbena medāvi thokan thokan khane khane, kammāro rajatassevo niddame malamattano".

It means by degrees little by little from time to time, a wise man should remove his impurities as a goldsmith removes the dross from silver. Do the merits, whenever one has a chance to do good deeds like a goldsmith. If a goldsmith repeatedly destroys the dirt from the gold again and again, it will be purified brightly. If it purifies, he can do any ornament as he likes. Similarly, when one's mind is purified by doing good deeds, one can do any higher merit. To purify the mind or life, firstly, one needs to observe morality-*sila*. Secondly, one contemplates the meditations to get concentration- *samādhi*, then one practices in sight meditation to know real nature of the mind and matter- *pañña*.

(3) To cause the wholesome states which have not arisen yet,

Sometimes, we need to avoid the deeds and to perform the deeds. Ethically, the method of restraining and following is the same as eating food and avoiding food. To be healthy, one should avoid the junky food. We should do the merit,

³⁴ Dhammananda, K. S. *Dhammapada Pāli*. Kuala Lumpur: Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society, 1988, p.263.

³⁵ *Dhp* 239.....

either following the good deeds or avoiding the bad deeds. For one who has a clear mind, it is easier to do good deeds. But we need the knowledge to know which is good or bad from the good guider. People live without thinking deeper to get a better life and to remove suffering because of laziness.

(4) To maintain the wholesome states which have arisen.

In line with right effort, the Lord Buddha said clearly to be mindful on the four:³⁶

Contemplating with mindfulness on the body:

Dealing with all actions of the body; breath in and out, four postures, detail all actions of the body including using toilet, reflecting 32 parts of the body, analyzing and dividing with four big elements and nine kind corpses, the meditator has to see clear understanding

Contemplating with mindfulness on the feeling:

Regarding contemplating with mindfulness on the feeling, the meditators must observe any feeling from any part of the body: pleasant, unpleasant, and neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings. While noting any posture for a long time, from any part of the body, any kind of feeling, without stopping noting the meditator must continue the noting mind with mindfulness.

Contemplating with mindfulness of the mind:

Contemplating with mindfulness of the mind is observing the action of the mind. Because of noting on the mind with mindfulness, it is more difficult than other and need to be more careful. A beginner does not know when the mind goes out immediately. If the one takes care the process mind, will know clearly.

Contemplating with mindfulness on the Dhamma objects:

Apart from saying above objects are called Dhamma objects. By noting on seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching and other dealing with all Dhamma are called *Dhammanupassanā*. Every object must be noted by meditators all the time.

3.4. Right concentration

Right concentration means focusing the mind on various objects to see clearly. If the meditator lacks concentration will not get good benefits to cause the growth of peace. So, to go on straight way without swaying and falling down the one should run steadfast. Right concentration is also called *Samatha*, which means tranquility of mind. Tranquilly means free from hindrances: greed, anger, delusion, etc. These hindrances are the obstructions of good deeds.

According to the Path to Purification, there are forty objects of contemplation. Among the forty objects, the meditators may focus on one of them according to their temperament. The Fundamental Abhidhamma shows

³⁶ DN 22.

the six kinds of temperaments³⁷ of humans:

- (1) *Rāga carita* – lustful temperament. In the types of temperament, the person knows his habit.
- (2) *Dosa carita* – hateful temperament
- (3) *Moha carita* – delusion or ignorant temperament
- (4) *Saddha carita* – faith temperament
- (5) *Buddhi carita* – intellectual temperament
- (6) *Vitakka carita* – thoughtful temperament

The masters guided the followers to practice on the four contemplations: the reflection abilities of the Buddha (*Buddhānussati*), the loving kindness (*Mettābhāvanā*), mindfulness on loathsomeness (*Asubhabhāvanā*), and mindfulness on the death (*Maranānussati*).

The four methods of meditation are suitable for all to practice. If the meditator can concentrate on the four methods, he may also control the other things. Because of concentration, he knows clearly his bodily action and speech. By knowing clearly, he can do more than before to grow inner peace. A meditator who wants to develop concentration must know the first factor of absorption (*Jhānangas*). They are as follows:

- (1) *Vitakka* (Initial application),
- (2) *Vicāra* (Sustain application),
- (3) *Pīti* (Rapture),
- (4) *Sukha* (Happiness) and
- (5) *Ekaggatā* (One pointedness).

Vitakka means the one's mind connecting with the object to note clearly. The characteristic of *vitakka* is sending to join the mind and object. *Vicāra* means applying and reflecting the mind on the object. *Pīti* means rapture, pleasing the object because of reflection and applying again and again. Having done the work repeatedly, the meditator will be skilled. Being skilled in things, the meditator is satisfied, it is called *Pīti* (rapture). *Sukha* is happiness. Because of satisfaction, the meditator gains happiness. *Ekaggatā* means the mind is steadfast on one object and unwavering on many objects. The five factors are based on each one; without *vitakka* cannot be *vicāra*; without *vicāra* cannot be *pīti*; without *pīti* cannot be *sukha*; and without *sukha* cannot be *ekaggatā*. Also, the five things are conditions and depend on each other.

According to a certain paragraph in the *Abhidhammā*: “*Vitakko thinamiddassa patipakko, vicāro vicikicchāya patipakkho, Pīti vyāpādassa patipakkho, sukham uddaccakukkuccassa patipakkho, Samādhi kāmīcandassa patipakkho ti petake vuttam.*”³⁸

It means these five factors are the opposite of their respected hindrances:

³⁷ *Abhidhammāsaṃgaha*, p.149.

³⁸ *Abhidhamma Atthakathā*, p. 210.

- (1) *Vitakka* is the opposite of slot and torpor.
- (2) *Vicāra* is the opposite of doubt.
- (3) *Pīti* is the opposite of the illness of the mind.
- (4) *Sukha* is the opposite of restlessness and remorse.
- (5) *Samādhi* is the opposite of sensual desire.

Regarding the hindrances, the Mahāsi Sayādaw wrote in his book named *Buddhist Meditation and Its Forty Objects*³⁹ thus:

- (1) The mind thinks of a desirable object. That is *Kāmacchanda nīvarana* (Sensuous lust).
- (2) The mind often dwells on thoughts of despair and anger. This is *vyāpāda nīvarana* (Ill-will).
- (3) There is a slackness in contemplation, and the mind is often dull and foggy. This is *thinamidda nīvarana* (Slot and torpor).
- (4) The mind is not often steady and restless, the mind is often worried on recollecting past misdeed in speech and body. This is *uddhacca kukkucca nīvarana* (Restless and worry).
- (5) The mind often dwells on the thoughts “whether the contemplation which being undertaken is a right method whether it is capable of bringing beneficial results, whether there are any good results”. This is *vicikicchā nīvarana* (Sceptical doubt).

By seeing the two sources, how the mind is dirty and why the Jhāna factors can be practiced carefully in our daily life. Also, these are the opposite of peace and if these are strong, nobody can stay steadfast. So, by doing concentration meditation, the meditators have to burn the hindrances (*Nīvarana*). Without training, nobody can have a steady mind and body. Without a steady mind and body, one cannot get the factors of Jhāna.

When the meditator is practicing among the forty objects of contemplation, he may choose any object that deals with the behavior. According to the *Visuddhimaggapālī*,⁴⁰ there are six types of behaviors: greed, anger, delusion, faith, wisdom, and thought. Suppose, if the meditator has a strong attachment to a thing, he must contemplate on the loathsomeness. By noting that object meticulously, he will see it as it is. As a result, he reduces his attachment to that thing.

Another object of contemplation is as follows:⁴¹

Four limitless (*Bramavihāra- Mettā, Karunā, Muditā, and Upekkhā*) and four-color (brown, yellow, red, and white) meditations can practice for one who has anger behavior.

The breath in and breath out meditation object can be practiced by the one who has various thoughts.

³⁹ Mahāsi Sayādaw, *Buddhist Meditation*, p.10 - 11.....

⁴⁰ *Visuddhimagga Pālī* 1, p. 98.

⁴¹ *Abhidhammatthasangaha*, p. 60.

The mindfulness of reflecting on death, the Nibbāna, and contemplating on the food as loathsome and four elements can be practiced by wise behaviors.

The reflecting abilities of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, Sila, offering, and Devata meditations can be practiced by one who has faith behavior.

The other remaining meditation objects can be practiced by all.

Everyone has different habits and powers. Owing to the power, the late foremost venerable Thich Nhat Hanh wrote “Understanding Our Mind” thus, “The seeds that we receive from our ancestors, friends and society are held in our consciousness, just as the earth holds the seeds that fall upon it. Like the seeds in our store, consciousness is hidden from us. We are seldom in contact with them. Only when they manifest in our mind consciousness do we become aware of them. When we feel happy, we may believe that there is no seed of anger in us, but as soon as someone irritates us, our seed will make itself known. Habit energy is an important term in Buddhist psychology. Our seeds carry the habit energies of thousands of years.”

The Sanskrit term for energy is *vasanā*. It means to permeate, to impregnate. If a person desires to drink jasmine tea, he picks the jasmine flowers, puts them in the box together with water, closes it tightly, and leaves it for several weeks. The fragrant jasmine penetrates deeply into the tea leaves. The tea leaves become one of jasmine, because it has absorbed the perfume of the jasmine blossoms.

Similarly, our store consciousness also has a strong capacity to receive and absorb fragrance. This perfume of our consciousness affects our patterns of seeing, feeling, and behaving. The seeds in our consciousness manifest not only in a psychological form but also as the objects of our perception, such as mountains, rivers, and other people. Because of energy, they are not able to perceive things as they are. We interpret everything that we see or hear. If a person crumples a sheet of paper, it is difficult to make it lie flat again; it has the habit energy of being crumpled. We are the same.⁴² As the saying of the late venerable Thich Nhat Hanh Habit depends on the close environment. If we say the concentration of chanting, reading, and thinking of the Buddha’s teaching are included in the *samatha* meditation because of concentration. It is right, one does good work steadfastly, then he gets many benefits for long lasting. Most people are willing to do their work to enjoy the benefits.

3.5. Right mindfulness

Right mindfulness is also known as insight meditation means knowing the nature of all phenomena. Through striving and contemplation by practicing meditation on any object, clearly the meditator will be deep his insight knowledge with concentration and mindfulness. Meaning when your concentration becomes strong by observing all phenomena, the manifestation of all six sense doors will become aware of psychophysical phenomena. Such

⁴² Nhat Hanh, T. (2006), *Understanding Our Mind*, United Buddhist Church, p. 49.

awareness represents insight into the mind and body. Then, *yogis* come to realize their causality, which means you develop insight into causality. If they practice further, they will see phenomena arising, vanishing and will have to know their impermanence. This realization starts from the contemplative insight.

3.6. Comprehension of meditation object

The *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* underlines the main word “*Sampajānakāri hoti*,” means observing all actions with contemplation and mindfulness. There are four kinds of *Sampajāna*:

(1) *Satthaka Sampajāna* means contemplating understanding on any actions that it is benefit or not. If the action is beneficial, the one does it, if the action is not beneficial for him, he avoids it. When the one sees any vision, he notes it as “seeing seeing”. By contemplating whether it is a benefit or not, the one only notes it. Similarly, the one notes as before, when he is hearing any sound, smelling any smell, tasting any taste, touching any part and any object about any objects.

(2) *Sappāya Sampajāna* means seeking understanding on any action; bodily action, verbal action, and mental action that is it suitable or not by personally, healthy, timely, etc. The one investigates on any objects that the speaking is suitable or not. If it is suitable I will speak it. If it is not suitable for me, I don’t do it. The one does all actions with mindfulness: doing, moving, bending, taking, sitting, standing, lying, sleeping, walking, etc.

(3) *Gocara Sampajāna* means staying by practicing and comprehension only on the meditation objects. Without wandering on the other objects, the meditator keeps his mind on the clear objects with mindfulness.

(4) *Asammoha Sampajāna* means the meditator comprehends a clear object without vacillation or unwavering.

Generally, some people try to improve their spiritual qualities. But they cannot choose which one is more important thing to do first because of lack of knowledge. Due to the ignorance, they do their jobs like the blind person is walking. They do not know when the suffering will stop. Not only unknown the time but also, they grow the craving again and again. Because of unknowledgeable, they are far away from the goal.

Deal with seeking the happiness, the Lord Buddha admonishes his followers about two points: the noble seeking and the ignoble seeking. The ignoble seeking means being subject to birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilements the one seeks only subject to birth, ageing, sickness, death, sorrow and defilements. His result is no different here and hereafter even he is doing good deeds.

The highest ultimate happiness is to be attained by contemplating to see its nature as they are. It is called the five aggregates. Why do the masters say only five aggregates? Because to replace the wrong view of identity with a right view of not-self. Beginners think that the mind and matter belong to them and attached to it. To know the nature of mind and matter, they only practice

vipassanā. Having seen the nature of mind and matter, they may reduce the level of greed, anger, and delusion.

The *vipassanā* method is to contemplate only the present objects. While sitting, the meditator should sit comfortably with any posture he or she likes. In the *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* guides the sitting type, “*Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu araṇṇagatova, rukkhamūlagatova, suñṇāgāragatova, nisiddati paṇiṇkamābhujitvā ujone kāyam panidhāya parimukham satim uppatthapetvā*”⁴³. The message here a monk, having gone into the forest or to the root of a tree or an empty place, sits down cross-legged, holding his body erect, having established mindfulness before him. It is for beginners, how to start the sitting meditation. While sitting comfortably, the meditator’s mind watches the body carefully with mindfulness. He sees the clear object; the nature of breath in, breath out in the body by motion coming in and going out the air. Normally, the breath-air is a very important thing for all living beings because it is one thing to know who is living or not.

The meditator should do noting as normal motion breath. When contemplating the form of breath, long, short, the start of breath, middle and end. The Mahāsi Sayādaw guided his meditators to note the motion of the abdomen rising and falling as it really is. Why? Because focuses on the abdomen is clearer and easier than on the nose tip. The noting of breath in and breath out is directly pointed to the *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta*⁴⁴. But the Buddha did not point to note directly. So, is it by literature of the Buddha or not for meditator? The noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen is a real object in accordance with the literature. Why do the rising and falling of the abdomen occur in our body? Because of air that named breathe. Why does the breath in the body? Because of mind becomes the breath. The *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta* said thus, “*yathā yathā kāyo panihito tathā tathā nam pajānātīm te ariyapathapabba*.”⁴⁵ It means that in whatever way his body is disposed of, he knows that that is how it is. The rising and falling of the abdomen are natural movement of the body. The movements of the abdomen appear because of breathing in and out. The meditator should not do to appear any object abnormally quickly, slowly and paused. If he prepared to be the other things cannot know the real nature of the object. So, the meditator should not prepare any object and has to note naturally as they are.

From the normal event the *yogis* see the nature characteristics in various objects. Through bodily movement, *yogi* sees the process of mind and matter. Here, mind and matter mean knowing mind or contemplating on the object is mind and the objects are matter in the body. It is called *Kāyānupassanā Satipatthāna*.

Health is very important for the meditator. So, the Lord Buddha messaged

⁴³ DN 22.

⁴⁴ DN 22.

⁴⁵ DN 22.

it as an important factor to get enlightenment in the *Samaya Sutta*.⁴⁶ Mostly, the meditators practiced meditation in the three types of postures: sitting, walking, and lying. When practicing standing meditation, they must note it as “standing, standing.” While standing steadily, they must note the rising and falling of the abdomen. As noting in sitting posture, they should note on the other objects in the standing meditation. A meditator is dear to assume a lying posture in rest time but should note it diligently until bed time. From waking up until bedtime, the meditator should act by noting every movement. For a beginner, failing to note some objects is normal, so he does not need to feel disappointed.⁴⁷ He should contemplate carefully the primary object and secondary object in the four postures.

In sitting meditation, within a half hour, the meditator may feel some sensations from any part of the body such as itching, stiffening, aching, and paining. At that time, he must note the feeling as it is. The noting of feeling is called *Vedanānupassanā Satipatthāna*, contemplating with mindfulness of feelings. When noting, some feelings disappear, reduce, and blur. If so, the meditator should note only evident objects. After that, the noting mind of him returns to his primary object of rising and falling of the abdomen. The meditator should be forbear in every action and feeling with mindfulness. If he cannot forbear it, he may change any posture by noting every movement slowly, not immediately.

After changing the posture, the pain sensation disappeared then the noting returns to the primary objects. While sitting meditation, the mind may wander, imagine, think, dream, consider, reflect, etc. Whatever object appears in the mind, he has to note it clearly immediately, never follows to the wander mind. By noting two, three, four times, he goes beyond the wandering mind. It is called *Cittānupassanā Satipatthāna*. If he can surmount and destroy the wander mind, the mind returns to the primary object. If failed and forgot to note the any objects, defilements inter and influence his mind.

Here in sitting meditation, *yogi* must close his eyes and in walking meditation, he must open his eyes to see the distance about two yards in front of him because of danger. To balance the four postures, the Mahāsi Sayādaw guided meditator to meditate for an hour sitting and for an hour walking regularly. If it is not balance, the posture will become problem in the body.

3.7. Purification of mind

To get supramundane happiness, *yogi* needs to do essential factors. When practicing meditation to attain enlightenment, the meditator must complete the seven stages of purification. There are seven types of purification:

- (1) *Sīlavisuddhi* - Purification of moral conduct due to control body and verbal.
- (2) *Cittavisuddhi* - purification of mind due to protect all defilements.

⁴⁶ AN. 5. 54.

⁴⁷ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (1999), *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 345.

(3) *Ditthivisuddhi* - Purification of view due to seeing the nature of mind and matter clearly.

(4) *Kankhāvitāranavisuddhi* - Purification by overcoming doubt due to realize cause and effect.

(5) *Maggāmagganānadassanavisuddhi* - Purification of knowledge what is the path and not due to wisdom.

(6) *Patipadānānadassanavisuddhi* - Purification of vision of the course of practice due to wisdom.

(7) *Nānadassanavisuddhi* - Purification of knowledge and vision due to wisdom.

The first *Silavisuddhi* has been explained earlier.

The second *Cittavisuddhi* means *Upacārasamādhī, appanāsamādhiceti duvidhopi Samādhī cittavisuddhi nāma*.⁴⁸ It means purification of the mind consists of two kinds of concentration, namely access concentration and absorption concentration. It is steady of mind by contemplating *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditations. Without virtue nobody can observe any meditations any good deeds and without meditation how one can take the concentrations. So, these two are main foundation of all purifications.

The third, *Ditthivisuddhi*:⁴⁹ "*Lakkhana rasa paccupatthāna, padatthānavasena nāmarupapariggaho ditthivisuddhināma*." It means purification of view is discernment of mind and matter with respect to their characteristics, functions, manifestations, and proximate causes. As mentioned above, about etymology of *vīriya* and *sukha*: the four types of characteristics have for every mind and matter. If we know the four things in every mind and matter clearly, we can eradicate wrong thinking as I, me, mine, soul, and self. On seeing the nature of mind and matter, the nothing is different in the world. Everything is same conditions. The superficially seeing good or bad, pleasant and unpleasant are only wrong thinking of worldly people.

The fourth, *Kankhāvitāranavisuddhi*: "*Tesamevaca nāmarūpānam paccayapariggaho kinkhāvitāranavisuddhi nāma*."⁵⁰ Purification by overcoming doubt is the discernment of the conditions of that same mind and matter. By striving effectively on the *vipassanā* meditation, yogis will know the cause and effect of the process of mind and matter. For example, while practicing meditation yogi sees the objects carefully, that time he notes it seeing, seeing. The seeing appears because of contact eyes and visions.

He knows it is something, because of knowing mind. Yogi's contemplating or knowing mind is only mind (*nāma*), eyes and the seeing vision are only matters (*rūpa*). Where is he, she, and person, it is only the process of mind and matter. If didn't see like that, we think the so long wrong view is right. The

⁴⁸ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (1999), *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 348.

⁴⁹ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (1999), *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 349.

⁵⁰ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (1999), *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 349.

wrong thinking is stronger the one is more difficult to destroy it.

The fifth one is purification of path and not path. Venerable Anuruddha explained in his book that:⁵¹

Tatoparam pana tathāpriggahitesu sappaccayesu tebhumakasankhāresu atitāadibhedabinnesu khandadinayamārabba kalāpavasen sankhipitvā aniccam khayatthena, dukkham bhayatthena, anattā asārakatthenati adhitthānavasena santativasena khanavasenava, sammasanānānena lakkhanattayam sammasantassa tesveva paccayavasena khanavasena ca udayabayanānena udayabbayam samanupassantassaca. Obāso pīti passaddhi adhimokkho ca paggaḥo, sukham nānamupatthānam upekkhāca nikanticati, Obhāsādi vipassanaupakkilese paripantha pariggahavasena maggāmaggalakkhanavavattānam maggāmagga nānadassana visuddhināma.

It means when he has thus discerned the formations of the three planes together with their conditions, the meditator collects them into groups by way of such categories as the aggregates, etc., divided into the past present and future. He next comprehends, with the knowledge of comprehension. Those formations are in terms of the three characteristics – impermanence in the sense of destruction, suffering in the sense of fearfulness, and nonself in the sense of carelessness, by way of duration, continuity, and moment. Then he contemplates with the knowledge of rise and fall the rising and falling of those formations by way of condition and by way of moment. As he does so, there arises; an aura, zest, tranquility, resolution, exertion, happiness, knowledge, mindfulness, equanimity and attachment. Purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path is the discrimination of the characteristics of what the path and what is not the path by discerning that those imperfections of insight, the aura etc. are obstacles to progress.

The *Anugghahita Sutta* talks the four skills of right view:⁵²

Right view is assisted by virtuous behavior,

Right view is assisted by learning,

Right view is assisted by discussion with learned in meditation,

Right view is assisted by calm *Samatha* meditation and insight *Vipassanā* meditation.

Mahāsi Sayādaw checked in meditator's noting method, seeing, facing problem and difficulties according to practicing meditation. And he urged meditators to discuss or consult with another yogi about practicing meditation openly. When meditation interviewer discusses about the practicing, the yogi should say honestly what they experienced. For example, an important journey is done on right way between the guider and traveler.

In meditation, the more the meditator practices, the more wisdom he

⁵¹ Bodhi, Bhikkhu (1999), *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 350.

⁵² AN 5. 25.

gains. As a master guides the method very well and smooth on every object. The concentration of *yogi* gets sharper, deeper, effort is vigorous, consistent and in balance with concentration. *Yogis* feel at ease, happy, blissful and peaceful. There arises tranquility and rapture due to insight. *Yogis* see some light pertaining to insight; sometimes sees a light like a lamp, other times a brilliant light and so on. The insight knowledge is keen, sharp and very penetrating it clearly realizes appearance and disappearance of mental and physical phenomena as they are noticed. There arises strong and firm faith in the Triple Gems. They have strong desire to urge their friends and relatives to practice this *Vipassanā* meditation. With these good experiences some *yogis* may think, this must be *Nibbāna*, this is great. They have never experienced this before, now they have *Nibbāna* and feel delight and become attachment. So, they do not wish to proceed with their practice; they are content with these good experiences, actually they experienced on half way to *Nibbāna*.

Therefore, these experiences are known as the ten corruptions of insight meditation. This stage may be experienced in about a few weeks if a *yogi* practices intensively with strenuous effort. *Yogi* must discuss with meditation master who can guide the path rightly clearly. Here, it is very important time by the guidance of master, *yogi* comes to right understanding that these are corruptions of insight. When realizes that delight in them is not the right path and only to notice them is the right path. That is why *yogi* can proceed with intensive practice and overcomes all the corruptions. Then he makes progress his qualities of insight towards the goal.

The sixth one is *Patipadānānadassana visuddhi*;⁵³

“Tathā paripanthavimuttassa pana tassa udayabbayanānato patthāya yāvanulomā tilakkhanam vipassnāparamparāya patipajjantass nava vpassaannānāni patiatpadānānā dassnavisuddhi nāma.

It means when he is thus free from those obstacles to progress as he practices he passes through a succession of insights I regard to the three characteristics, beginning with knowledge of rise and fall and culminating, in conformity. These nine insights knowledge are called purification by knowledge and vision of the way.

Because of seven purifications, *yogi* appears ten *Vipassanānāna* insight knowledge. Here, seven purifications compare with ten insights knowledge. The ten types of insight knowledge as follows:⁵⁵ a) *Sammasanañāna* - knowledge of comprehension, b) *Udayabayanāna* - knowledge of rise and fall, c) *Bangañāna* - knowledge of the dissolution, d) *Bhayañāna* - knowledge as fearful, e) *Ādinavañāna* - knowledge as dangerous, f) *Nibbhidañāna* - knowledge of disenchantment, g) *Muncitukalyatāñāna* - knowledge of desire

⁵³ Nārada, (2013). *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. India: Mahabodhi Book Agency, p.352

⁵⁵ Ibid Nārada, (2013). *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. India: Mahabodhi Book Agency, p. 346.

for deliverance, h) *Patisankhāñāna* - knowledge of reflecting contemplation, i) *Sankhārupekkhāñāna* - knowledge of equanimity towards formation, j) *Anulomañāna* - knowledge of conformity.

These ten types of knowledge support succession, for example without comprehension and practicing knowledge cannot get the knowledge of rise and pass.

3.8. Purification of knowledge and vision

To get the ten types of insight knowledge, the main characteristic is mindfulness, the main foundation is morality, and the main leader is wisdom. A yogi needs to try hard to improve the above insight knowledge by holding the three main points: mindfulness, morality, and wisdom.

The last one is purification of knowledge and vision:⁵⁴ “*Tasse vanpatipajjantassa pana vipassanāparipākamāgama idāni appanā uppajjanti ti bhavangam vocchinditva uppannamanodvāravajjananantaram dvetini vipassacittani yam kinci aniccādilakkhanamārabha prikammopacārānulomānamena pavuttanti, yāsikhapattā cānulomā sinkhārupekkhā vutthānagānivipassnā ti pavuccati.*”

When he thus practices contemplation, owing to the ripening of insight, now the absorption will arise. Thereupon, arresting the life - continuum, there arises mind – door adverting. Followed by two or three insight consciousness having for their object any of the characteristics such as impermanence, etc. they are term preparation, access and conformity. That knowledge of equanimity towards formations together with knowledge that conforms, when perfected, is also termed insight leading to emergence.

These are natural process of meditation and the process become normally from practicing of yogi to attain the inner peace. But regarding to yogi's perfection the process is different; some are easy and some are not. To clear understanding there are four ways according to their perfections; “Monks, there are these four modes of practice. Which four?

- (1) Painful practice with slow intuition,
- (2) Painful practice with quick intuition,
- (3) Pleasant practice with slow intuition,
- (4) Pleasant practice with quick intuition.⁵⁵

And which is painful practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally of an intensely passionate nature. He perpetually experiences pain & distress born of passion. Or he is normally of an intensely aversive nature. He perpetually experiences pain and distress born of aversion. Or he is normally of an intensely deluded nature. He perpetually experiences pain and distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty

⁵⁴ Nārada, (2013). *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. India: Mahabodhi Book Agency, p. 354.

⁵⁵ AN 4.162.

of concentration, the faculty of discernment appear weakly. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with slow intuition.

And which is painful practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally of an intensely passionate nature. He perpetually experiences pain and distress born of passion. Or he is normally of an intensely aversive nature. He perpetually experiences pain and distress born of aversion. Or he is normally of an intensely deluded nature. He perpetually experiences pain and distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his - the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment appear intensely. Because of their intensity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called painful practice with quick intuition.

And which is pleasant practice with slow intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally not of an intensely passionate nature. He does not perpetually experience pain and distress born of passion. Or he is normally not of an intensely aversive nature. He does not perpetually experience pain and distress born of aversion. Or he is normally not of an intensely deluded nature. He does not perpetually experience pain and distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his - the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment appear weakly. Because of their weakness, he attains only slowly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with slow intuition.

And which is pleasant practice with quick intuition? There is the case where a certain individual is normally not of an intensely passionate nature. He does not perpetually experience pain and distress born of passion. Or he is normally not of an intensely aversive nature. He does not perpetually experience pain and distress born of aversion. Or he is normally not of an intensely deluded nature. He does not perpetually experience pain and distress born of delusion. These five faculties of his - the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment appear intensely. Because of their intensity, he attains quickly the immediacy that leads to the ending of the effluents. This is called pleasant practice with quick intuition. These are the four modes of practice.

To sharpen the faculty of conviction, the faculty of persistence, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of discernment we have the five powers to be full in our lives: faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. Without inner peace in oneself cannot share for others. Without sharing about the inner peace most people are not able to know it. should be noted the verse in the Dhammapada that the Buddha said: "*Attānameva pathaman patirupe nivesaye. Athiññamanusāseya nakilisseya pandito*".⁵⁶ It means

⁵⁶ Mya Tin, trans. (1995), *Dhammapada Verses and Stories*, Yangon: Myanmar Pitaka Association, p. 226.

one should first establish oneself in what is proper, then only one should teach others. A wise man should not incur reproach. Saying for other is easy. But doing for oneself is very difficult. It is right, most people can do first themselves but they do not solve their problem. By hoping from others' sharing, they cannot know the way of peace. It is not only for inner peace but also the outer peace to get enough money, food, clothes, dwellings etc. Doing a few times they want to get much happiness. They never compare causes and effect that it is proper or not, possible or not. Lacking exerting effort nothing happiness can get in the world. Every peace and happiness have each quality. On trying the ability, the meditator who wishes to gain the peace has to try it. If the leader has many followers should compare one of another with happiness and peace. Nobody disturbs his result.

IV. CONCLUSION

Regarding with inner peace, the readers may know much publications and references from the Buddhist Literatures. By applying its modes, the meditators are able to possess the inner peace. The Buddha ever stated in the *Vitthāra Sutta*⁵⁷ the meditators must check on these four modes; "which one is mine, painful practice with slow intuition, painful practice with quick intuition, pleasant practice with slow intuition and pleasant practice with quick intuition. By applying to obtain something, they know how to do through self-experiences. Hence, to rejoice the inner peace, meditators must cultivate it gradually. If someone wishes to plough the fruits and flowers as an ownership, then he must plant the seeds first on the good land. He must water the seeds regularly and has to weed around that plant. Sometimes the insects may bite that tree to take its sprouts. These insects are making the nest and staying there. The insects know well when the working hours of the gardener.

At night the insects come out and take the sprout of tree. Therefore, the gardener should care of that tree according to season and place. The growth of tree depends on his care. If he does his works regularly, the tree will produce its fruits and flowers. Similarly, the meditator who cultivates the inner peace should follow the Noble Path such as morality, wisdom, Dhamma-discussion, concentration and *vipassanā* (insight).

On account of following the five factors; moral ethic, knowledge, discussing with learned noble person, concentration meditation and insight meditation the meditator gets the fruition of inner peace. To experience the taste of ultimate truth, the meditator must invest the deepest good deeds. Inner peace is the cause of outer peace. So, having attained the inner peace, the meditator does not need to do extra special outer peace. When the inner peace is well realized and comprehended perfectly, the outer peace will be arisen automatically in him. The writer wishes all the readers may grow the cause of inner peace without any difficulty accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. By planting and cultivating the inner peace, the meditator may attain the ultimate inner and intuition peace wonderfully.

⁵⁷ AN 4. 162.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR GLOBAL HARMONY: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON MINDFULNESS, VIPASSANĀ, AND ETHICAL LIVING

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Abstract:

The scope of threats, such as World War Three, mass destructive weapons, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, resource scarcities, ideological struggles, disparities in health and wealth, and globalizing trends, are all complicated problems that limit the inner peace of individuals and the peaceful world of human society of the 21st century. Therefore, nonviolent values of resolving differences, the importance of reconciliation in human interrelations, promoting peaceful cultures, and healing societal structures and global institutions that promote peace are key elements in the here and now. During the last two decades, peace psychology has become a specialty in psychology with its perspectives, concepts, knowledge base, and preferred methodologies to alleviate threats to human security and promote human well-being. Moreover, peace psychology activists and scholars connect human psychology to other disciplines to prevent and mitigate violence and structural forms of violence. In addition to reducing violence, peace psychologists develop theories and practices that enhance the relational harmony of interpersonal relations and global networks. The psychological theory deepens public understanding of the significant threats to the inner peace of humanity. It addresses some of the most urgent and critical issues on human well-being and world peace in the 21st century.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, global harmony.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definitions

(1) Anxiety: Anxiety is a multifaceted response encompassing physiological, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to perceived threats. It manifests as heightened arousal, excessive worry, and avoidance behaviors, often interfering with daily functioning and overall well-being.¹

(2) Depression: Depression is characterized by persistent sadness, diminished interest in previously enjoyable activities, and a pervasive sense of emotional distress. This condition disrupts fundamental aspects of daily life, including sleep patterns, appetite, and cognitive focus. As a leading cause of disability worldwide, depression significantly contributes to the global disease burden. Its impact can be chronic or episodic, affecting an individual's ability to engage in meaningful activities and maintain a high quality of life.²

(3) Loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*), a practice deeply rooted in traditional Buddhist contemplative disciplines, has been shown to alleviate stress and mitigate symptoms of depression. By fostering a shift in self-perception and nurturing compassion, it aids practitioners in developing emotional resilience and self-care. During the practice, individuals adopt a stable seated posture - either on a chair or in the lotus position - closing their eyes and silently reciting phrases that cultivate goodwill and benevolence. The core objective of *mettā bhāvanā* is to evoke a state of inner tranquility and emotional warmth, thereby promoting a profound sense of well-being.³ In Buddhist teachings, meditation is regarded as a means of direct insight into the nature of the self, unconditioned by reliance on external forces. The Buddha emphasized that true inner peace arises from cultivated and disciplined meditative practice rather than dependence on external circumstances or deities.⁴

(4) Mindfulness (*sati*) is the deliberate and sustained attention to present-moment experiences, cultivated without judgment or attachment. It is a practice of attentional regulation that fosters heightened awareness and equanimity. Defined as the intentional and purposeful focus on the present, mindfulness encourages an open and non-reactive attitude toward one's thoughts and emotions.⁵ Furthermore, it involves returning to the present moment with a disposition of kindness and curiosity, enhancing self-awareness and emotional regulation.⁶

(5) Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) encompass therapeutic approaches that integrate mindfulness practices into mental health treatment. These interventions, often incorporating meditative techniques, are designed

¹ McLaughlin & King (2015), p. 311.

² American Psychiatric Association [APA] (2013), p. 215.

³ Welaratna (2016), p. 47.

⁴ Dhammananda (2017), p. 102.

⁵ Bluth & Blanton (2014), p. 78.

⁶ Shapiro (2020), p. 134.

to enhance emotional resilience, attentional control, and overall psychological well-being. MBIs are widely applied in clinical psychology to address conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders, frequently in conjunction with cognitive-behavioral strategies.⁷

(6) Negative affect encompasses a broad spectrum of distressing emotional states, including anxiety, sadness, fear, anger, guilt, shame, and irritability. It represents a shared variance among these emotions, highlighting their interconnected nature within affective experience.⁸

(7) Stress is a physiological and psychological response to perceived challenges or demands. It can arise from external pressures or internal cognitive appraisals, often manifesting in emotional tension, frustration, and nervousness. While commonly associated with adverse effects, stress can also serve a functional role, facilitating motivation and adaptive responses to critical situations.⁹

(8) *Vipassanā*, meaning “insight,” refers to the direct experiential realization of reality as it is, a foundational practice rediscovered and expounded by Gotama Buddha over 2,500 years ago. The term *vipassanā* is derived from two Pali components: *vi*, denoting analytical discernment, and *passanā*, referring to deep perception. This meditative practice is centered on penetrating the fundamental nature of existence through sustained mindfulness and insight.

In the Buddhist framework, *vipassanā* entails the recognition of three universal characteristics (*tilakkhana*): impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). The objective of *vipassanā* meditation is to cultivate a profound understanding of these truths, thereby liberating the mind from delusions that perpetuate suffering. Practitioners engage in systematic observation of bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions, fostering an unshakable awareness that leads to wisdom (*prajñā*) and liberation (*nibbāna*).¹⁰

1.2. *Vipassanā* meditation

Vipassanā Meditation and Its Role in Cultivating Inner and Global Harmony: In an increasingly fast-paced and stress-laden world, the necessity of both inner peace and global harmony has become more critical than ever. Modern life is marked by escalating levels of depression, anxiety, and social fragmentation, largely driven by economic pressures, rapid technological advancements, and a growing disconnection from traditional family structures and communities.¹¹ Amidst this turbulence, there has been a renewed interest in *vipassanā* (insight meditation) and mindfulness-based practices, which offer a transformative pathway to both personal tranquility and collective well-being.

⁷ Crane et al. (2017), p. 990.

⁸ Watson et al., (1988), p. 1065.

⁹ Comer & Comer (2017), p. 205.

¹⁰ Sayadaw (2019), p. 54.

¹¹ Twenge (2017), p. 45.

Vipassanā Meditation: A Path to Insight and Liberation. *Vipassanā* is a meditative technique rooted in mindfulness (*sati*) and self-observation, tracing back over 2,500 years to ancient Indian contemplative traditions.¹² The term itself is derived from two Pali words: *vi*, signifying analytical discernment, and *passanā*, meaning deep seeing or insight. It encapsulates the practice of perceiving reality as it truly is, rather than through the distortions of conditioned perception.¹³ Buddhist doctrine emphasizes three fundamental characteristics of existence (*tilakkhana*), which *vipassanā* seeks to realize directly: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). Through sustained meditative practice, one develops profound insight (*prajñā*), leading to the cessation of attachment and, ultimately, the attainment of liberation (*nibbāna*).¹⁴ Unlike conventional relaxation techniques, *vipassanā* is not merely a stress-reduction practice; rather, it is a rigorous contemplative discipline aimed at deconstructing the root causes of suffering.

Vipassanā Meditation as a Catalyst for Social Harmony: Beyond personal transformation, *vipassanā* has profound implications for global harmony and social interconnectedness. By cultivating inner peace, practitioners develop heightened emotional intelligence, ethical discernment, and compassion (*karunā*), which naturally extend to interpersonal and societal relationships. In a world often fragmented by conflicts rooted in greed, intolerance, and misunderstanding, *vipassanā* serves as a bridge across cultural and ideological divides, fostering a shared sense of humanity.¹⁵ Research indicates that *vipassanā* enhances prosocial behaviors, including cooperation, altruism, and communal responsibility. Another research found that mindfulness meditation significantly increases compassion, promoting an empathetic and supportive social environment.¹⁶ Similarly, the study notes that the ethical precepts (*sīla*) upheld within the framework of *vipassanā* practice contribute to conflict resolution by fostering patience, non-reactivity, and deep listening.¹⁷ The cultivation of such ethical dispositions strengthens both individual well-being and the collective moral fabric of society.

Psychological and Ethical Benefits of *Vipassanā* Practice: At the psychological level, *vipassanā* meditation has been associated with numerous cognitive and emotional benefits. It facilitates greater emotional resilience, reduces stress, enhances empathy, and fosters positive social interactions. The practice encourages a heightened awareness of mental processes, enabling practitioners to disengage from automatic negative thought patterns and

¹² Goenka (1997), p. 12.

¹³ Dhammananda (2017), p. 102.

¹⁴ Sayadaw (2019), p. 54.

¹⁵ Gopinath (2005), p. 679.

¹⁶ Condon et al. (2013), p. 2125.

¹⁷ Hart (1987), p. 89.

cultivate a more balanced and equanimous state of mind.¹⁸ These psychological benefits, in turn, reinforce ethical living, creating a reciprocal cycle of personal and societal well-being. Moreover, *vipassanā* promotes ethical behavior and community responsibility, aligning individual transformation with broader social and global imperatives. In an increasingly interconnected world, truthfulness (*sacca*), compassion, and nonviolence (*ahimsā*) become essential for fostering mutual respect and cooperation. The study argues that by developing inner peace, *vipassanā* practitioners contribute to peaceful dialogue and conflict resolution, addressing both local disputes and global challenges.¹⁹

Practical Application of Vipassanā in Daily Life: The practical methodology of *vipassanā* entails systematic awareness of bodily and mental phenomena. Practitioners are trained to observe their sensory experiences - seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking – without attachment or aversion. For instance, breath awareness serves as a foundational anchor in meditation, allowing individuals to cultivate deep concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*vipassanā*) into the impermanent nature of existence.²⁰ As meditators deepen their practice, they become increasingly aware of the transient and conditioned nature of their thoughts and emotions. This realization fosters a non-reactive, mindful presence that extends beyond formal meditation sessions into everyday life. Such mindful awareness transforms interactions, reducing impulsivity, enhancing patience, and fostering a sense of interdependent responsibility.

In a world marked by widespread psychological distress, social fragmentation, and ethical dilemmas, *vipassanā* meditation emerges as an essential practice for both individual and collective well-being. Its unique synthesis of mindfulness, ethical cultivation, and insight-based wisdom makes it a powerful tool for navigating the complexities of modern life. By fostering inner tranquility and ethical responsibility, *vipassanā* contributes to a virtuous cycle of personal transformation and societal harmony, ultimately paving the way for a more compassionate and peaceful world.

II. THERAVADA VIPASSANĀ TRADITION AND MINDFULNESS-BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY (MBCT)

The *Theravāda* tradition of *vipassanā* meditation, particularly as developed by Mahāsi Sayadaw, continues to be widely practiced in Burma and beyond. His method of mindfulness training is structured around systematic mental noting and direct observation of bodily and mental phenomena, guiding practitioners through progressive stages of insight (*vipassanā ñāṇa*). Retreat meditators who diligently follow these instructions often report significant experiential progress within the initial week of practice.²¹

¹⁸ Shapiro et al. (2009), p. 78.

¹⁹ Gopinath (2005), p. 680.

²⁰ Sayadaw (1996), p. 45.

²¹ Sayadaw (2019), p. 87.

The framework of insight meditation has significantly influenced the development of mindfulness-based programs in the West. Foundational teachers such as Kornfield (1979), Armstrong (2013), and Catherine (2011) have adapted aspects of traditional Buddhist teachings into contemporary psychological contexts. A crucial concept within this integration is *vedanā* (sensory experience), which encompasses pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral sensations as they arise in response to internal and external stimuli. In mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), attention to *vedanā* is instrumental in understanding how habitual cognitive patterns contribute to emotional distress.²² This awareness aligns with traditional *vipassanā* practice, where the observation of *vedanā* serves as a gateway to deeper insight into impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*).²³ Within the structure of MBCT, an evidence-based clinical adaptation of mindfulness training, the relationship between emotional reactivity and meditative awareness is systematically explored. Early sessions (two and three) introduce mindfulness of emotional valence, while subsequent sessions (four and five) encourage participants to observe attachment and aversion, recognizing how these tendencies perpetuate psychological distress.²⁴

Buddhist Mindfulness and Its Contemporary Psychological Applications: The traditional practice of *vipassanā* has gained recognition as a highly effective contemplative method for addressing various psychological and emotional conditions.²⁵ Mindfulness meditation (*sati bhāvanā*), which dates back to the time of the Buddha's awakening under the Bodhi tree, has since been integrated into therapeutic interventions worldwide.²⁶ These applications have demonstrated effectiveness in mitigating stress, enhancing emotional resilience, and cultivating a greater sense of purpose.²⁷ The study underscores the role of mindfulness in counteracting stress and social alienation in modern society, asserting that mindfulness fosters greater self-awareness and ethical living.²⁸ By promoting a non-judgmental attentiveness to present-moment experience, mindfulness facilitates cognitive flexibility and emotional stability.²⁹ Another study further highlights the benefits of mindfulness in workplace environments, noting its positive impact on teamwork, stress reduction, and overall organizational productivity.³⁰

Cognitive Aspects of Mindfulness: Mindfulness, as a cognitive framework, enhances awareness of thought and emotion processes, facilitating

²² Segal et al. (2012a), p. 127.

²³ Anālayo (2003), p. 54.

²⁴ Segal et al. (2012a), p. 143.

²⁵ Rao (2024), p. 56.

²⁶ Dhammananda (2017), p. 72.

²⁷ Kristeller & Jordan (2019), p. 98.

²⁸ Kabat-Zinn (2003), p. 132.

²⁹ Siegel (2007), p. 41.

³⁰ Hülshager et al. (2013), p. 310.

greater psychological adaptability.³¹ By enabling practitioners to disengage from automatic negative thought patterns, mindfulness fosters a more balanced mental state. The study describes mindfulness as “the perfection of mindlessness,” emphasizing the paradoxical nature of awareness as both an active and a letting-go process.³² The study further elaborates that mindfulness is best understood as the intentional return to present-moment awareness with an attitude of curiosity, kindness, and non-reactivity.³³ Similarly, it argues that mindfulness enhances self-compassion and reduces maladaptive cognitive patterns by fostering emotional regulation and attentional control.³⁴ Research also suggests that mindfulness practitioners develop greater receptivity to sensory and emotional stimuli, leading to increased resilience against distressing experiences.³⁵

The integration of *vipassanā* into contemporary psychological frameworks has yielded significant advancements in both personal well-being and social cohesion. While MBIs provide accessible mindfulness training, traditional *vipassanā* meditation remains a more comprehensive path toward deep existential insight. As mindfulness continues to gain prominence in therapeutic contexts, a more nuanced understanding of its traditional Buddhist roots will be essential in ensuring its ethical and psychological efficacy. Future research should explore ways to bridge the depth of *vipassanā* training with modern mindfulness applications, ensuring that practitioners benefit from both its transformative insights and practical therapeutic value.

The *Theravāda* tradition in Burma remains a significant center for the practice and transmission of *vipassanā* meditation, particularly through the systematic mindfulness training developed by Mahāsi Sayadaw. His structured approach emphasizes continuous mental noting and direct observation of bodily and mental phenomena, allowing practitioners to progress through various stages of insight (*vipassanā ñāna*). Many retreat meditators following this method report noticeable advancement within the first week of disciplined practice.³⁶ The conceptual framework of *vipassanā* has influenced the development of mindfulness-based programs in the West, particularly through the work of early mindfulness teachers such as Kornfield (1979), Armstrong (2013), and Catherine (2011). A key aspect of this integration is the role of *vedanā* (sensory experience), which encompasses pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral sensations as they arise in response to internal and external stimuli. In mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), awareness of *vedanā* is fundamental in understanding how cognitive patterns contribute to psychological distress,

³¹ Kostanski & Hased (2009), p. 15.

³² Langer (1997), p. 120.

³³ Kabat-Zinn (2003), p. 147.

³⁴ Shapiro (2020), p. 134.

³⁵ Shaw (2020), p. 86.

³⁶ Sayadaw (2019), p. 87.

particularly about rumination and suffering.³⁷ This awareness aligns with traditional *vipassanā* practice, wherein observation of *vedanā* serves as an entry point for deeper insight into impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*).³⁸

2.1. Distinctions between MBIs and Traditional *Vipassanā*

Despite foundational similarities, MBIs and classical *vipassanā* meditation differ in their theoretical emphasis. The study highlights that while MBIs cultivate mindfulness as a means of emotional regulation and cognitive restructuring, they often lack explicit guidance on existential insights such as *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*.³⁹ For instance, in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), impermanence is acknowledged but not systematically explored as an experiential realization.⁴⁰ By session three, participants are encouraged to observe arising and passing mental phenomena, yet without the structured insight training characteristic of traditional *vipassanā*.⁴¹ Although Western mindfulness practitioners may still develop insight through sustained practice, traditional *vipassanā* provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding the nature of conditioned experience and mental formations. The study argues that theoretical knowledge of Buddhist principles is crucial for deepening mindfulness practice, as it contextualizes meditative experiences within a structured path of wisdom (*prajñā*).⁴² In response to this gap, more recent iterations of MBCT have incorporated discussions on impermanence, *vedanā*, and their connection to attachment and aversion elements more aligned with classical Buddhist teachings.⁴³

Advancing through the stages of insight can present challenges for many mindfulness practitioners, particularly those unfamiliar with the intense cognitive and emotional shifts that may occur. The study notes that students often experience destabilizing insights, necessitating skilled instruction to navigate them safely.⁴⁴ Armstrong further emphasizes the role of experienced teachers in guiding practitioners through these stages, adjusting their instructions based on each individual's progress. Without proper orientation, premature exposure to deep insight practices may lead to emotional distress or existential uncertainty. Jack Kornfield, drawing from decades of teaching experience, highlights the importance of adequately trained instructors who can provide supportive guidance during transformative yet potentially unsettling phases of meditative practice. A lack of proper instruction in insight meditation may not only hinder progress but could also lead to unintended

³⁷ Segal et al. (2012a), p. 127.

³⁸ Anālayo (2003), p. 54.

³⁹ Grabovac (2015), p. 35.

⁴⁰ Kabat-Zinn (1990), p. 67.

⁴¹ Segal et al. (2012b), p. 92.

⁴² Crane et al. (2017), p. 990.

⁴³ Segal et al. (2002), p. 208.

⁴⁴ Kornfield (1979), p. 211.

psychological effects.⁴⁵

2.2. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy

In Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, practitioners are trained to wake up when they should pay attention to their breathing by observing five-minute mindful breaths. Practitioners also notice changes in their posture by being aware of their bodies and emotions as they change positions from lying down to sitting, standing, and walking. They should be mindful each time as they transition from one posture to the next. Mindfulness practitioners should be aware of the sounds they hear, like a bird singing, a train passing, a car horn, a burst of laughter, the wind sound, the door closing sound, et cetera. All the sounds here are reminders of the present moment and disconnect practitioners' racing thoughts. They should focus on breathing throughout the day by observing five minutes of mindful breathing. Whenever they eat or drink, they should observe the food or drink and realize that the food and drink not only nourish their body but also their insight to see the sunlight, the earth, the rain, the farmer, and the trucker in the food to develop their spirituality. Therefore, they should consciously eat the food and comprehend the positive and negative effects on their physical health. Mindfulness practitioners should be aware of the food, smell the food, chew the food, taste the food, and swallow the food mindfully.⁴⁶

Practitioners similarly notice their body's posture while they walk or stand. They should focus on their feet contacting the ground and feel the air on their face, arms, and legs as they walk. Mindfulness practitioners bring awareness to listening and talking without agreeing, disagreeing, liking, or disliking. They should say what they need to say without overstating and notice how their mind and body feel in the here and now. Whenever mindfulness practitioners wait in line, they should notice their inhaling, exhaling, or standing posture. For instance, how their feet contact the floor and how their body feels. Mindfulness practitioners can bring attention to the rising and falling of their abdomen and observe whether they feel impatient or peaceful. Mindfulness practitioners should be aware of any tightness in the body throughout the day as they inhale and exhale, letting go of excess tension in their face, jaw, neck, shoulder, stomach, or lower back, and may stretch or do yoga once a day. Mindfulness practitioners can pay attention to their daily activities, such as washing up, brushing their teeth, putting on their shoes, or doing their jobs by being mindful of every daily activity. Before going to sleep at night, mindfulness practitioners can observe the five-minute mindful breath and bring the intention to breathe in and breathe out in a joyful and peaceful state of mind.

2.3. Loving-kindness meditation practice

Loving-kindness meditation stems from traditional Buddhist meditation that can help individuals with stress and depression by decentering and

⁴⁵ Grabovac (2015), p. 40.

⁴⁶ Segal et al. (2018), p. 122 – 4.

developing self-care and compassion. During these sessions, practitioners sit comfortably in a chair or the lotus position with closed eyes and read silently as they relax their minds and body. The objection of the loving-kindness meditation is to induce feelings of happiness and serenity. During the first session, practitioners will mindfully and silently chant the following:

May I be well, happy, and peaceful. (3 times)

May I be well.

May I be happy.

May I be peaceful.

May I be well, happy, and peaceful. (3 times)

May I be free from anger.

May I be free from hatred.

May I be free from jealousy.

May I be free from anxiety.

May I be free from depression.

May I be well, happy, and peaceful. (3 times)

May I be kind to myself.

May I be compassionate to myself.

May I be generous to myself.

May I be well, happy, and peaceful. (3 times)

I forgive myself for any wrong I have done, knowingly and unknowingly.

I will no longer carry any anger, hatred, jealousy, anxiety, or depression within me.

My mind will be pure in thought.

My actions will be pure in intention.

My words will always be kind.

May I be well, happy, and peaceful.⁴⁷

2.4. Deep relaxation technique

In the second session, Dr. Welaratna teaches the deep relaxation technique based on traditional Buddhist meditation as follows:

You can begin this session 90 minutes after a heavy meal by lying on a flat, warm, comfortable surface like a bed, carpet, or blanket. Gravity helps the relaxation process. Keep your hands straight by your sides, with palms facing up. The legs should be straight and about hip-width apart. Take three deep breaths, and relax your body as you exhale. After this, breathe normally. Close your eyes and imagine you are in a very peaceful environment.

⁴⁷Welaratna (2016), p. 1.

Now, focus on your forehead and begin to relax the muscles there. You can say silently to yourself, “I am relaxing. I am relaxing. I am relaxing my forehead.” You can also consciously move your focus from left to right as you relax the muscles there.

Next, gently move your focus to your eyelids and relax your eyelids as you did previously with your forehead. If you feel you have closed your eyes tightly, let go and relax them. You can encourage the muscles to relax by saying, “I am relaxing. I am relaxing. I am relaxing my eyelids.”

Now, move your attention gently to your jaws and relax them. Follow the previous steps and direct your focus downstream to other anatomical parts like your tongue and lips. We have much tension around our mouth area, so you should relax your jaws, tongue, and lips more. If your lips open a little, do not worry, as it indicates that you are relaxed.

Now, gently move your focus to your neck and relax it. As you move on, bring intentional relaxation to your neck and all other muscle groups, as you did earlier.

From your neck, move your attention to your shoulders and relax your shoulders.

Next, relax your right upper arm and lower arm.

From there, relax every finger in your right hand. Spend more time on your hands because they, too, may have immense built-up tensions. When your right hand is relaxed, move down to your right leg. First, relax the thigh and calf area and then the right foot.

Next, gently move your attention first to your left foot and then the leg.

From there, move your attention to your left hand and relax all the fingers of your left hand. Then, relax your left lower arm and upper arm.

Now, shift your focus to the chest area and scan and relax the muscles in your chest area, moving from left to right.

Move down to the abdominal muscles from the chest area, and relax your abdominal muscles from left to right.

Then, move your attention to your back and relax your back muscles.

Finally, take a deep breath and exhale, relaxing your muscles from the forehead to the toes.

To get up, turn to one side and slowly support yourself with your arm.

Note: When you master this technique, telling yourself to relax will not be necessary. You will become conscious of tensions in your body even when sitting and standing, and you will quickly relax your muscles.⁴⁸

III. CONCLUSION

This literature review highlights the profound impact of Vipassanā meditation and mindfulness practices as both a psychological treatment and a

⁴⁸ Welaratna (2016), pp. 2 – 3.

tool for fostering social harmony. The evidence gathered from historical texts, empirical studies, and theoretical discussions demonstrates that Vipassanā offers a unique and comprehensive approach to well-being that transcends the boundaries of traditional psychological therapies. Its dual focus on self-awareness and ethical living addresses the fundamental causes of psychological distress and nurtures a more compassionate and cohesive society. Vipassanā's psychological benefits, such as enhanced self-awareness, emotional regulation, and reduced stress, are well-documented and widely recognized in psychology and neuroscience. Studies by Kabat-Zinn (2003) and Hölzel et al. (2011) underscore how Vipassanā promotes cognitive flexibility and mental resilience, making it an effective intervention for a range of mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, and stress. Additionally, the practice's ability to foster emotional intelligence and empathy further enhances interpersonal relationships, leading to more harmonious social interactions. The social benefits of Vipassanā are equally compelling. By promoting qualities such as compassion, patience, and ethical behavior, Vipassanā contributes to reducing social conflict and promoting community cohesion.

Siegel (2007) and Condon et al. (2013) report how mindfulness practices and Vipassanā meditation can enhance prosocial behaviors and reduce prejudices to foster inclusivity and social justice in diverse and interconnected societies. The integration of psychological and social benefits is a central value of Vipassanā that reflects its holistic well-being practice. When individuals cultivate inner peace through mindfulness and ethical living, these qualities naturally extend to their interactions with others to generate a ripple effect of positivity within their communities. Gopinath (2005) emphasizes the potential of Vipassanā to contribute to global peace and conflict resolution and impact both personal and societal challenges. Vipassanā offers a practical and effective technique in modern society, where stress, social fragmentation, and ethical dilemmas are prevalent. Vipassanā focuses on mindfulness, self-regulation, ethical behaviors, and contemporary needs for balance and harmony in a fast-paced world. Vipassanā's relevance extends beyond individual mental health to provide broader societal issues such as social inequality, environmental sustainability, and global peace. Vipassanā meditation and mindfulness are powerful and integrative techniques for timeless and timely well-being. Future researchers should continue exploring how the Vipassanā approach affects cultivating both inner and world peace.

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A NOVEL APPROACH TO EMOTIONS TO CULTIVATE INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: A BUDDHIST MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF EMOTIONS?

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*Reaching a balance between happiness and distress,
Emotions help us to lead a happy life.
All our emotions are important, including those that sound 'negative'
... the most difficult is sadness and grief, ...
But positive emotions enrich a nurturing path to well-being
Excesses of negativity and trauma create a blind wall to be seen ...
Overlooking the love and anger, forgiveness and kindness to
people, we give ...
In general, positive feelings from happy events do not last – we
become used to them – and distressing feelings from
Distressing events do not last either.
This is the golden key to a happy life.
Padmasiri de Silva, *Emotional Rhythms of Our Lives*¹*

Abstract:

Both happiness and unhappiness are emotional experiences. They are foundational and essential elements of the human mental landscape. The paper underscores the vital role of emotions in the human pursuit of happiness. Inner peace is a crucial emotional state - a positive experience that may benefit all humans if they attempt to cultivate it. Though negative emotions are natural and deeply human, we tend to marginalize them, ignoring their potential for personal growth. A key Buddhist contribution is

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¹ Padmasiri de Silva, *Emotional Rhythms of Our Lives* (Melbourne: Mihindu Publications, 2023), pp. 37 – 38.

that it demonstrates a profound connection between inner peace and world peace while highlighting the significance of individual experience. Grasping the true nature of our emotions is the key to fostering nurturing environments that lead to inner tranquility and global harmony. This paper illuminates the transformations that Buddhism showcased when individuals strive for peace and happiness. Buddhism delivers a clear and compelling message regarding peace within and world peace, centered around our emotions. The paper discusses the unequivocal Buddhist position on peace while exploring vital ethical considerations. Although the Buddha did not actively prevent war, he offered profound insights highlighting the complexities and potential consequences of conflicts and wars. It is worth reminding that peace does not occur by chance; it is our responsibility as global communities to establish the required frameworks and structures that may successfully uphold peace and avert conflict. A profound Buddhist argument is that by adopting caring attitudes, fostering compassion, and living with loving-kindness, global communities can collectively play a distinct and significant qualitative role in sustaining peace in our world by delivering our share of individual, collective, and global responsibility.

Keywords: *Buddhist psychology, emotions, ethics of peace, happiness, inner peace, moral psychology, war, well-being, world peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a state we often pursue. Happiness is not merely an emotion, just as the unhappiness we seek to avoid is also an emotional experience. It is a fundamental aspect of our existence, much like peace, which embodies a vital mental state and a significant social phenomenon. Sadness is a shared experience, as suffering is an intrinsic part of being human. The Buddha insightfully examined happiness and sadness, recognizing them as essential elements of our mental landscape. This leads us to an important conclusion: inner peace (*ajjhatta santi*) or ‘internal peace’ or ‘peace within’ can be understood as a vital emotional state – a positive experience that deserves cultivation for the enhancement of human well-being and overall happiness.

In our pursuit of a fulfilling life, peace and happiness stand out as universal and noble aspirations. However, while negative emotions are natural and deeply human, society often marginalizes them, ignoring their potential for personal growth. Delving into our emotions is crucial for revealing the pathways to inner peace and global harmony.

A key contribution of Buddhism is its connection between inner peace and world peace, emphasizing the importance of the individual experience, which merits deeper exploration. To answer the question of what inner peace truly means, one could assert that it involves the cultivation of noble qualities such as equanimity (*upekkhā*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*).

Buddhism underscores the significance of developing inner peace and provides effective techniques, including various meditation methods, to

support this essential practice. Embracing these principles can guide us toward a harmonious existence, both within ourselves and in the world around us.

Even in the twenty-first century, Buddhist teachings remain inclusive and deeply respectful of human dignity. Although rooted in ancient religious and spiritual contexts, these principles hold significant implications for sustainable development goals that we seek to achieve today.

This paper seeks to illuminate Buddhist inspirations and transformations, showcasing how individuals' striving for peace and happiness as uplifting forces while navigating pain. Buddhism, with its profound focus on mental development and the exploration of emotional states, delivers a clear and compelling message regarding both inner peace and world peace, centered around our emotions. In today's world, it serves as a powerful narrative of unity, inclusivity, dignity, and integrity.

II. ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD SERIES MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE EMOTIONS (2017 – 18)

On 21 November 2024, Dr. Padmasiri de Silva (1933–2024) passed away in Melbourne, Australia, at the age of 91. He was a distinguished former Professor and Head of Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Peradeniya.² Widely acknowledged as the father of the innovative field known as “Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions,” de Silva’s contributions to academia have been profound.³ With his extensive training and experience in counseling, he dedicated his life to uncovering transformative insights into the Buddha’s teachings on the mind. His work emphasized the importance of understanding emotions, which often entrap us and lead to stress, unhappiness, and mental health issues. This paper seeks to delve into how Buddhist conceptualizations of emotions can inspire not only inner peace but also contribute to global harmony.

From 2017 to 2018, Rowman & Littlefield launched a pivotal series titled “Moral Psychology of the Emotions,” under the expert editorship of Mark Alfano.⁴ This influential multi-volume collection presented a significant academic challenge for Padmasiri de Silva, who found himself deeply engaged with its content. While he appreciated the integration of Buddhist concepts in some volumes, he was profoundly disappointed by the treatment of certain Buddhist ideas related to emotions. He believed that the series fell short in accurately representing the teachings of the Buddha as articulated in the *Pāli*

² The tribute that I wrote in memory of de Silva was published in *The Island* (13 December 2024) and *The Sunday Times* (22 December 2024), <https://island.lk/in-memory-of-prof-pad-masiri-de-silva-1933-2024/>

³ De Silva’s most recent monograph, *Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions: Compassion and Vulnerability in Times of a Crisis*. Melbourne: Mihindu Publications, 2025, was launched in Melbourne, Australia on the eve of his 92nd birth anniversary on 18th January 2025. I edited and prepared the monograph for publication. The monograph emphasizes humility, forgiveness, and empathy in charitable deeds.

⁴ Alfano, Mark (ed.). *The Moral Psychology of the Emotions*. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017 – 2018.

canon of the *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition. As I contribute to the advancement of a *Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions*,⁵ just published in January 2025, I had the privilege of working alongside de Silva on this important project. In my contribution, I crafted a detailed introduction titled “Padmasiri Factor in the Study of Moral Psychology of Emotions,” which highlights his insightful scholarship in the field.⁶ Recognizing the crucial role that emotions play in human well-being, it is possible to examine the Buddhist perspectives on both inner and outer happiness as integral aspects of emotional experience, which promises to enrich our understanding of well-being and emotions.

De Silva’s latest publication, *Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions* (2025), is a groundbreaking work that offers profound insights into the moral psychology of emotions as illustrated by the Buddha’s teachings. By integrating Buddhist perspectives on emotions like pride, anger, compassion, and forgiveness, the field of moral psychology can be further enhanced. De Silva has consistently sought to deepen our understanding of Buddhist perspectives on the mind and its complexities, weaving these concepts into a scholarly dialogue with prominent Western frameworks, such as Freudian psychology and contemporary emotional studies in neuroscience.⁷

De Silva argues that *Theravāda* Buddhist perspectives on emotions have been overlooked in mainstream psychological discourse. His recent monograph serves as an essential complement to the Rowman & Littlefield series on the “Moral Psychology of the Emotions” (2017–18). While the series has contributed significantly to our grasp of emotions, de Silva compellingly contends that it has neglected valuable Buddhist insights that could enrich and deepen our understanding of emotional experiences. He stresses that the series has left critical gaps by failing to explore beyond the limited scope of ‘compassion’ and ‘anger.’

In his newest work, de Silva harmonizes various discussions on the moral psychology of emotions, embedding them in a contemporary framework that draws from the wisdom of the Buddha. Undoubtedly, de Silva’s extensive research expands the frontiers of Buddhist psychology and ethics, offering essential tools for a richer understanding of human emotions.

A distinctive contribution of de Silva’s recent research is its attempt to integrate insights from neuroscience, mindfulness-based therapies, and moral

⁵ Padmasiri de Silva and Mahinda Deegalle, *Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions*. Mihindu Publications, 2025.

⁶ Mahinda Deegalle, “Padmasiri Factor in the Study of Moral Psychology of Emotions”, in Padmasiri de Silva and Mahinda Deegalle, *Buddhist Moral Psychology of Emotions*. Mihindu Publications, 2025), pp. x–xxii.

⁷ See, for example, Padmasiri de Silva’s, *The Psychology of Emotions in Buddhist Perspective*, Sir D. B. Jayatilleke Commemoration Lecture, Colombo 1976. The Wheel Publication No. 237 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1976 [2006]): https://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh237_de-Silva_Psychology-of-Emotions-in-Buddhist-Perspective.pdf and *The Psychology of Emotions and Humour in Buddhism*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

psychology to address contemporary issues of human suffering. Neuroscience research supports the benefits of mindfulness and shows reduced activity in anxiety-related brain areas and improved emotional regulation.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF EMOTIONS

A pivotal aspect of Buddhist moral psychology lies in the transformation of emotions. The practice of mindfulness has garnered widespread acclaim for its profound impact on emotional well-being. Extensive research has illuminated the transformative effects of mindfulness meditation, underscoring its ability to serve as a powerful tool for cognitive and ethical purification. This benefit significantly surpasses the common perception of meditation as merely a method of relaxation. Buddhist mindfulness practices focus on observing and understanding emotions rather than eliminating them. The practice emphasizes acceptance and non-reactivity. When mindfulness is reduced to a relaxation technique, its transformative essence and significance are often overlooked.

Buddhist teachings on emotional transformation are deeply grounded in moral psychology, emphasizing the critical roles of compassion and forgiveness. These principles are not only fundamental to personal growth but are also instrumental in resolving conflicts and fostering understanding. Embracing this approach can lead to meaningful change in our emotional landscape and interpersonal relationships.

Buddha's Metaphors that Led to Self-transformation and Inner Peace

In the context of the post-COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability has triggered widespread feelings of sadness across the globe. The profound and highly complex emotion of sadness deserves our attention. Researchers have highlighted its common presence in our lives and the nuanced understanding that comes with it.

The teachings of the Buddha are rich with profound stories of sadness that exemplify the path to self-transformation. Among these, two significant encounters of the Buddha demonstrate how suffering can lead to deep personal insight.

One of the most powerful narratives involves a young woman named Kisāgotami, who found herself engulfed in sorrow after the tragic deaths of her husband and two sons.⁸ In her grief, the Buddha advised her to seek mustard seeds from a household where no one had died, suggesting that this quest would offer relief. As she embarked on her search, however, Kisāgotami experienced a transformative journey. This pursuit pushed her to confront the realities of life, leading her to a deeper understanding of impermanence (*anicca*) and the nature of suffering. Through this metaphor of the mustard seed, Kisāgotami learns that her overwhelming pain can be a catalyst for profound personal growth. Her suffering becomes a stepping stone to clarity and insight about the cycle of life and death, fundamentally changing her perspective. Ultimately,

⁸ For the story of Kisāgotami, see G.P. Malalasekera's *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, vol. I. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd., 2002, pp. 609 – 610.

the story of Kisāgotami serves as a compelling illustration of the Buddhist viewpoint on sadness and suffering. It highlights how facing our pain can foster emotional maturity and transformative wisdom, making us more attuned to the reality of our existence.

We can draw another example from the life of a young student turned criminal: Angulimāla, who wore a garland (feminine *mālā*) made of human fingers.⁹ His troubled and criminal past highlights a story of personal transformation and evidence of the severe negative impact of unhealthy social and educational structures. This episode of the young student at Takśilā provides insight into the complexities of personal relationships and the cruelty present in social norms and educational practices. These significant unhealthy factors (e.g., bullying in schools) can lead to significant personal tragedies. The Buddha's encounter with Angulimāla illustrates the profound potential for personal change and a deeper understanding of human suffering, challenging traditional interpretations of *karma* and servitude. This narrative offers important insights into how unnecessary suffering is often caused by societal manipulation and the failure of society to address negative and unhealthy tendencies.

IV. PEACE 'WITHIN' FOR WORLD PEACE

Buddhism's most significant contribution to the world is its deep insight into fostering inner peace. From a Buddhist perspective, outer peace, or "world peace," as highlighted as the conference theme of this Vesak celebration gathering, cannot be achieved without cultivating inner peace within each individual. Buddhism directs our attention to focus on the individual to produce the required result. To effect change in the world, we must first embark on a journey of personal transformation, step by step, by utilizing methods and techniques that facilitate growth. The commitment to individual transformation is Buddhism's essential gift to contemporary society.

To attain inner peace, the Buddha taught the practice of meditation and the development of penetrating insight. This potential lies within all of us; we must seize every opportunity to pursue and experience that happiness. By doing so, we can contribute to a more peaceful world for everyone.

4.1. *An Internal Transformation Ethics of Peace*

In 1938, I. B. Horner (1896–1981) contributed a pivotal article titled "War and Peace in Early Buddhism" for the Vesak commemoration, which was published the following year in the Sri Lankan newspaper *Daily News*. Horner notably held the position of President of the Pāli Text Society from 1959 to 1981.

⁹ *The Majjhimanikāya*, vol. 2. Robert Chalmers (ed.), London: The Pāli Text Society, 1898), pp. 97 – 105; I.B. Horner (trans.), *The Middle Length Sayings*, vol. II. London: The Pāli Text Society, 1957, pp. 284 – 92. To understand how vernacular textual strategies had been used to communicate Angulimāla's internal transformation, see Mahinda Deegalle, *Popularizing Buddhism: Preaching as Performance in Sri Lanka*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 86 – 92.

Her journey into the world of *Pāli* and Buddhism began during her teenage years when she met the esteemed Thomas Rhys-Davids (1843–1922), the Society’s founder, at a meeting at the University of Cambridge. This profound encounter cultivated her passion for studying Buddhism in depth and learning *Pāli*. At just 25, she traveled to Sri Lanka, Burma, and India, embarking on a transformative journey after resigning as Acting Librarian at Newnham College, University of Cambridge, in 1921. By 1938, Horner had made multiple trips to Sri Lanka and had established significant connections with Ceylonese scholars, including Venerable Polwatte Buddhadasa (1887 – 1962).

By sharing insights about Miss Horner, we can recognize her critical message on ‘peace’ in her Vesak article. Her work details key aspects of a fundamental doctrine that enhances our understanding of the ethics of peace within Buddhism, urging readers to appreciate the depth and significance of these teachings in our contemporary world.

For in the ethics of peace and of abstention from injury, the East has had a tremendous advantage over the West. The West inherits no doctrine, is permeated by no teaching like that of *ahimsā*, non-injury, non-violence, a doctrine of great antiquity yet surviving throughout the centuries, founded on respect for life and person, alike of the injurer and the injured, the slayer and the slain.¹⁰

I want to highlight some important points regarding Horner’s quotation. She has accurately identified the translation of the significant Indic term *ahimsā* as “non-injury,” which is far more precise than the often misinterpreted, problematic modern term “non-violence.” While Horner acknowledges the latter translation (which had become by then popular), it is crucial to recognize that *ahimsā* carries a deeper meaning than just the absence of violence. Horner rightly underscores that “respect for life” is a core tenet of Buddhism. This principle serves as the foundation for an ethic of peace within the tradition, making it a vital aspect of Buddhist practice. Notably, “respect for life” is not just an ideal; it is the first of the five precepts (*pañca sīla*) that guide all lay practitioners. Moreover, we should give serious consideration to Horner’s claim that Buddhism – and its related Indic traditions – has a unique advantage over Western philosophies when it comes to the preservation of life. This perspective provides valuable insights into how we can foster a deeper understanding of ethics and compassion in our world today.

An essential philosophical insight is the profound connection between the slayer and the slain, the injurer and the injured. These binary distinctions are crucial for understanding and appreciating the value of peace. Recognizing that these distinctions are not absolute is key to understanding and valuing peace. From a Buddhist perspective, both the injurer and the injured are intertwined through *karmic* relationships that can carry through multiple lifetimes.

¹⁰ I. B. Horner, “War and Peace in Early Buddhism,” *Daily News*, 1939. Vesak, typed script, p. 2.

This expansive worldview is powerfully illustrated in various Buddhist narratives, such as the story of the Demoness *Kāli* in Dharmasēna Thera's *The Jewels of the Doctrine* (1991).¹¹ This work furnishes a thirteenth-century commentarial elaboration in Sinhala on verse 5 of the *Dhammapada* from the *Pāli* canon.¹² Let me share the relevant verse in *Pāli*, which seeks to highlight the significance of a universal and eternal law that transcends all distinctions:

*Na hi verena verāṇi
Sammantī'dha kudācanam
Averena ca sammantī
Esa dhammo sanantano.*

The English translation below is a modern, poetic one.

*For never here
Do hatreds cease by hatred?
By freedom from hatred, they cease:
This is a perennial truth.*¹³

Buddhism articulates a profound truth: “Enmity is never quelled by enmity.” This powerful *Dhammapada* verse provides a unique and compelling argument against harm, destruction, and animosity, vividly showcasing the Buddha's commitment to nonviolence. In Buddhist traditions, this enduring principle serves as an unchanging law guiding our understanding of harming and non-harming. In her article, Horner underscores that a “respect for life and the person” is an essential characteristic of Buddhism, emphasizing the importance of compassion and empathy in our interactions.

4.2. Inner peace and harmonious living

Peace stands as a cornerstone of Buddhism, while war has no place within its teachings. Over the centuries, both adherents and critics have lauded Buddhism for its profound doctrines of love and compassion. The early Buddhist tradition encapsulates the idea of peace with the *Pāli* word “*santi*,” which means tranquility and peace. As stated in the *Dhammapada* (verse 202), “There is no bliss higher than peace.”¹⁴ This deep commitment to peace has led many to regard the historical Buddha as *santirāja*, or the “King of Peace.” For dedicated Buddhist practitioners, the ultimate aspiration is to achieve perfect inner peace.

Throughout their rich history, Buddhists have sought to embody the Buddha's path, striving for inner peace while also fostering peace in their social

¹¹ Dharmasēna Thera. *The Jewels of the Doctrine: Stories of the Saddharma Ratnāvaliya*, translated by Ranjini Obeyesekere. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 97–110.

¹² *The Dhammapada*. Nārada Mahāthera, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1978, v. 5.

¹³ *The Dhammapada*. Valerie J. Roebuck, London: Penguin, 2010, v. 5, p. 3.

¹⁴ *The Dhammapada*. Nārada Mahāthera, v. 202.

and cultural environments. Living a good life means cultivating harmonious relationships with others. The *Pāli* term “*sama-cariya*” signifies this pursuit of a harmonious lifestyle. Such harmonious living inherently nurtures “inner peace” within individuals. To illustrate this vital internal transformation, ancient texts like the *Suttanipāta* (verse 837) refer to “*ajjhata santi*,” or “internal peace.”¹⁵ Buddhist traditions emphasize a close connection between harmonious living (*sama-cariya*) and righteous living (*dhamma-cariya*). For true peace to flourish - both within oneself and within the community - righteousness and harmony must walk hand in hand.

V. NEGATIVE PHENOMENA IN WAR MANIFESTATIONS

Buddhism stands out as a practical tradition, one that thoughtfully observes both the positive and negative aspects of our world. It does not shy away from acknowledging harsh realities like war; instead, it embraces the complexity of human existence. In the era of the Buddha, conflict was commonplace. Indian rulers would often solicit the Buddha’s insights on effective governance, yet they frequently resorted to war to further their political ambitions.

Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha (566 – 486 BCE), passionately preached against the destructiveness of war and its repercussions. However, even he found it necessary to intervene directly on two occasions to help resolve violent conflicts, illustrating that even the wisest among us must sometimes confront the challenges posed by human nature.

The first significant conflict involved the Buddha’s relatives, the Śākyaans and the Kōliyaans.¹⁶ In a time of drought, a fierce dispute erupted over the sharing of water from the Rohinī River. The Buddha chose to step in and asked them a crucial question: What holds greater value, river water or blood? By making them reflect on their motives, the Buddha effectively highlighted the sheer futility of waging war. In another compelling narrative, history suggests that the Buddha struggled to prevent war from breaking out. Following a derogatory remark, Prince Vidudabha declared war on the Śākyaan kingdom after the death of King Pasēnadi.¹⁷ Understanding the threat to his relatives, the Buddha bravely stood in King Vidudabha’s way three times to halt his advance. However, on the fourth occasion, he refrained from intervening, recognizing the negative *karma* that could emerge from poisoning a river. This *karmic* insight, along with the Buddha’s attempts to intervene, demonstrates that even he had limitations in stopping conflict. Historical records indicate that the Buddha did not support kings pursuing war. Yet, there is an important story

¹⁵ *Suttanipāta* v. 837: “But seeing into views, not grasping any of them, investigating, I saw the peace within,” *The Suttanipāta*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Melksham, Wilts and Somerville, MA: The *Pāli* Text Society and Wisdom Publications, 2017, p. 301.

¹⁶ For a brief detail of battle between the Śākyaans and the Kōliyaans over the Rohinī River, see G.P. Malalasekera’s *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, Vol. II. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd., 2002, p. 762.

¹⁷ For a description of Vidudabha, see G.P. Malalasekera’s *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, Vol. II, pp. 876–877.

that reveals his reluctance to actively prevent it. When Ajātasattu sought to defeat the Vajjians, the Buddha did not explicitly discourage him from going to war.¹⁸ Instead, he shared a powerful truth: as long as the Vajjians remained devoted practitioners of the seven conditions of welfare (*satta aparihāṇiyā dhammā*), defeating them would be virtually impossible.¹⁹ This wisdom emphasizes that true strength lies not in warfare but in adherence to ethical principles and community cohesion.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper underscores the vital role that emotions play in our pursuit of happiness. Just as sadness is a fleeting feeling, happiness also comes and goes; that is the inherent nature of a transient emotion. It is essential to grasp the true nature of our emotions, as this understanding is key to fostering nurturing environments that lead to both inner tranquility and global harmony.

Moreover, this paper explores vital ethical considerations regarding peace. Peace is unequivocally central to Buddhism, which has historically and philosophically opposed all forms of war. Although the Buddha did not actively prevent war, he offered profound insights to those involved, highlighting the complexities and potential suffering associated with conflict. Rather than intervening, he chose to guide those who sought his counsel toward embracing peaceful lifestyles.

The Buddha consistently encouraged the development of positive mental attitudes, empowering everyone to participate in the creation of peace. It is crucial to recognize that peace does not occur by chance; it is our responsibility as human beings to establish the frameworks and structures that uphold peace and avert conflict. By adopting caring attitudes, fostering compassion, and living with loving-kindness, we can collectively play a significant role in sustaining peace in our world.

¹⁸ For the original text of King Ajātasattu's intention to defeat the Vajjians and his consultation of the Buddha, see Mahinda Deegalle, "The Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia," *Religion, War, and Ethics: A Sourcebook of Textual Traditions*, (eds.) Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse and Nicole M. Hartwell. New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 565–567.

¹⁹ For the seven conditions of welfare (*satta aparihāṇiyā dhammā*), Mahinda Deegalle, "Buddhist Principles of Democracy: An Exploration of Ethical and Philosophical Foundations," *Buddhist Studies (Bukkyo Kenkyu)* 26 (March 1997), pp. 92–93.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE – THE BUDDHIST APPROACH

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Abstract:

In a world increasingly characterized by rapid globalization, complex political conflicts, environmental crises, and growing social tensions, the pursuit of world peace has never seemed more urgent. The quest for peace is often focused on external solutions, such as treaties, military disarmament, and economic co-operation. A growing body of thought suggests that true, lasting peace must begin at the individual level. The concept of inner peace is the cornerstone of this perspective. From Mahatma Gandhi's advocacy of non-violence and self-purification to the Dalai Lama's teachings on compassion and mindfulness, there has been a consistent belief that peace in the world begins within everyone. This paper examines how cultivating inner peace can be a transformative force for world peace. It will explore how inner peace can serve as the foundation for resolving conflicts, both internal and external, and offer practical pathways for individuals, communities, and governments to contribute to a more harmonious world. By examining the historical, psychological, and socio-political intersections of inner peace and world peace, this paper will argue that cultivating inner peace at an individual level can act as a catalyst for broader social change. By addressing these interconnected facets with special reference to Buddhist philosophy, this paper will provide a comprehensive analysis of how personal peace can positively impact global peace efforts. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the interconnectedness of personal and global peace. It will argue that if individuals are empowered to cultivate inner peace, they will be better equipped to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world, leading not only to personal fulfillment but also to the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious global society.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In a world increasingly characterized by rapid globalization, complex political conflicts, environmental crises, and growing social tensions, the pursuit of world peace has never seemed more urgent. Nations and societies, while interconnected in an unprecedented manner, often find themselves divided by ideological, cultural, and economic differences. The quest for peace, whether it is diplomatic, social, or environmental, remains a pressing challenge in international relations and societal development. However, while global peace efforts are often focused on external solutions - such as treaties, military disarmament, and economic cooperation - a growing body of thought suggests that true, lasting peace must begin at the individual level.

The concept of inner peace is the cornerstone of this perspective. Inner peace, often defined as a state of mental and emotional calmness, stability, and resilience, is not only essential for personal well-being but is also viewed as a necessary condition for broader social harmony and global peace. Throughout history, many thinkers, philosophers, and spiritual leaders have emphasized the profound relationship between personal peace and world peace. From Mahatma Gandhi's advocacy of nonviolence and self-purification¹ to the Dalai Lama's teachings on compassion and mindfulness, there has been a consistent belief that peace in the world begins within everyone.²

This paper examines how cultivating inner peace can be a transformative force for world peace. Through the exploration of psychological, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions of inner peace, it aims to demonstrate that the practice of self-awareness, mindfulness, emotional regulation, and compassion has profound implications for global peace-building efforts. It will explore how inner peace can serve as the foundation for resolving conflicts, both internal and external, and offer practical pathways for individuals, communities, and governments to contribute to a more harmonious world.

The central thesis of this research is that inner peace, far from being a passive or purely individual pursuit, plays a crucial role in the global pursuit of peace. By examining the historical, psychological, and socio-political intersections of inner peace and world peace, this paper will argue that cultivating inner peace at an individual level can act as a catalyst for broader social change. This includes reducing fostering empathy, increasing global cooperation, and providing a foundation for sustainable and peaceful societies.

This paper consists of the definition and nature of inner peace, the role of mindfulness and meditation, the psychological mechanisms behind conflict resolution, the influence of spiritual practices, and the integration of peace education into society. By addressing these interconnected facets with special

¹ Gandhi, M. K. (2001). *The story of my experiments with truth* (M. Desai, Trans.). Beacon Press. Original work published 1927, p. 102.

² Dalai Lama, & Cutler, H. (1998). *The art of happiness: A handbook for living*. Riverhead Books, p. 231.

reference to Buddhist philosophy, this paper will provide a comprehensive analysis of how personal peace can positively impact global peace efforts.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the interconnectedness of personal and global peace. It will argue that if individuals are empowered to cultivate inner peace, they will be better equipped to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world, leading not only to personal fulfillment but also to the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious global society.

II. DEFINING INNER PEACE

Inner peace is often described as a state of mental and emotional balance, free from the turmoil and conflict that can arise from negative thoughts, emotions, and external pressures. It is a state of well-being in which an individual experiences calmness, acceptance, and clarity of mind, regardless of the external circumstances.³ While inner peace may manifest differently for different individuals, the core attributes generally include serenity, resilience, and an absence of inner conflict. It is a state in which one's mind is free from agitation, and emotional stability allows for a peaceful interaction with oneself and the world.⁴

Philosophically, inner peace can be understood as a harmonious alignment of the mind, body, and spirit. The term "peace" itself has roots in both ancient Greek and Latin, where it refers to tranquility, completeness, and a sense of wholeness. In the modern context, the notion of inner peace has evolved to include psychological concepts such as emotional intelligence, stress management, and mindfulness.⁵

Inner peace is not merely the absence of stress or anxiety, but a positive state of well-being characterized by a deep sense of contentment, acceptance, and balance. It involves both the absence of inner turmoil and the active cultivation of mental and emotional clarity. For example, mindfulness- the practice of being present in the moment without judgment- is often used as a tool to develop and maintain inner peace.

2.1. Historical perspectives on inner peace

The concept of inner peace has been integral to various philosophical, spiritual, and psychological traditions for centuries. Ancient civilizations recognized the importance of inner tranquility as a means of achieving personal and societal harmony.⁶ In many Eastern traditions, such as Buddhism, Taoism,

³ Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848.

⁴ Smith, J. (2018). "The Psychology of Inner Peace." *Journal of Mental Well-being*, 10 (2), 45 - 60.

⁵ Brown, K. (2017). "Emotional Stability and Inner Peace." *Psychological Studies*, 15 (3), 120 - 134.

⁶ Johnson, M., (2019). *Philosophical Perspectives on Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 89.

and Hinduism, inner peace is seen not just as an individual goal but as a means of transcending suffering and contributing to the collective well-being.

Buddhism emphasizes inner peace as essential for overcoming suffering. The Buddha's teachings on the four noble truths and the eightfold path guide individuals in cultivating an understanding of the causes of suffering and how to alleviate it. The practice of mindfulness and meditation, under Buddhist teachings, helps individuals to gain control over their thoughts, emotions, and reactions, thereby fostering inner peace. The goal in Buddhism is to reach Nirvana, a state of enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of suffering, where inner peace is considered the highest form of existence.

In Taoism, the concept of peace is closely linked to the idea of "Wu Wei" or "non- action." Taoists believe that peace is achieved by aligning oneself with the natural flow of the universe, rather than struggling against it.

Hinduism also incorporates the notion of inner peace through its practices of meditation, yoga, and devotion. The *Bhagavad Gita*, a central text in Hindu philosophy, teaches that peace is found through self-discipline, detachment from material desires, and devotion to the Divine. The concept of "ātman" (the true self) in *Hindu* philosophy suggests that inner peace arises when individuals recognize their connection to the universal spirit, transcending the ego and personal conflict. "The soul (ātman) is neither born, nor does it ever die; nor having once existed, does it cease to be. It is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. It is not slain when the body is slain."⁷

In Western traditions, Stoicism offers a philosophical approach to inner peace, which focuses on controlling one's reactions to external events. According to Stoic thought, inner peace arises when one accepts the natural order of the world and focuses on maintaining a calm and rational mind in the face of adversity.

In contrast, Christianity emphasizes the role of faith and submission to the will of God in attaining inner peace. The teachings of Jesus, particularly the Beatitudes, highlight the importance of humility, forgiveness, and love in achieving peace. Christian contemplative practices such as prayer and meditation are also seen as pathways to inner tranquility and connection with God.

While the specific practices may vary, a common thread across these various traditions is the idea that inner peace is achieved through self-awareness, self-discipline, and a shift in perspective that transcends personal desires and attachments. This historical understanding of inner peace as a state of harmony with oneself and the universe continues to influence modern approaches to mental and emotional well-being.⁸

2.2. Psychological perspectives on inner peace

From a psychological standpoint, inner peace is closely linked to mental

⁷ *Bhagavad Gita* 2.20

⁸ Patel, S (2021)., *The Art of Finding Balance: A Psychological Approach to Inner Peace*. Sage Publications, p. 87.

health, emotional intelligence, and the ability to manage stress and adversity. Psychologists often define inner peace as a state of emotional regulation in which an individual feels calm, grounded, and resilient in the face of challenges. Modern psychology integrates cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness practices, and emotional intelligence (EI) to help individuals cultivate inner peace.

2.2.1. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT):

For example, is a widely used therapeutic approach that focuses on changing negative thought patterns that contribute to anxiety, stress, and depression. By altering unhelpful thinking patterns and adopting healthier perspectives, individuals can achieve greater emotional regulation and, in turn, experience a greater sense of individual inner peace.⁹

2.2.2. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR):

Developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, is another psychological approach that has gained widespread recognition for its ability to promote inner peace. MBSR combines mindfulness meditation with yoga to help individuals cultivate awareness and acceptance of their present moment experience. Research has shown that mindfulness practices can significantly reduce anxiety, depression, and stress, promoting a state of inner calm and balance.¹⁰

2.2.3. Emotional intelligence (EI):

A term popularized by Daniel Goleman,¹¹ refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. "The mind, hard to control, flighty- alighting where it wishes- one does well to tame. The disciplined mind brings happiness."¹² Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to regulate their emotions, navigate social interactions, and cope with stress, all of which contribute to a sense of inner peace.

2.3. The importance of inner peace for global peace

While inner peace is often regarded as an individual pursuit, its implications extend far beyond the personal realm. The cultivation of inner peace is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in global peace-building efforts. As we live in an interconnected world where personal actions can ripple outward to impact society, the ability to maintain inner peace becomes central not only to personal well-being but also to the well-being of others.

When individuals experience inner peace, they are more likely to engage in positive, empathetic behaviors that contribute to social harmony. For instance, studies have shown that people who practice mindfulness and emotional

⁹ Beck, J. S. (2011), *Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (2nd ed.), New York: Guilford Press, p. 101.

¹⁰ Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990), *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*. New York: Delacorte Press, p. 86.

¹¹ Daniel Goleman (2009). *Emotional intelligence*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, p. 98.

¹² *Dhammapada* 35.

regulation are better at resolving conflicts, building trust, and fostering cooperation in their relationships and communities.

Furthermore, inner peace serves as a foundation for collective efforts aimed at achieving global peace. Leaders who embody inner peace, whether through self-awareness, emotional intelligence, or a commitment to nonviolence, are often better equipped to navigate the complexities of diplomacy, negotiation, and international relations. *Mahatma Gandhi's* philosophy of “*ahimsa*” (non-violence) and the Dalai Lama’s emphasis on compassion are prime examples of how inner peace can translate into social and political leadership that prioritizes harmony over conflict.

III. UNDERSTANDING MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

At the heart of many traditions promoting inner peace are the practices of mindfulness and meditation. While often used interchangeably, these terms represent distinct yet complementary practices that can foster deep psychological and emotional well-being. Mindfulness refers to the state of being fully present and aware of one’s thoughts, emotions, and sensations in the present moment, without judgment. “When one is mindful and observes the mind with wisdom, one’s actions become pure, and suffering diminishes.”¹³ It involves paying attention to internal and external experiences in a non-reactive way, fostering acceptance and understanding rather than resistance.

Meditation, on the other hand, is a structured practice that typically involves focusing attention and eliminating the stream of thoughts that may clutter the mind. “A *Bhikkhu*, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, he breathes in mindfully, he breathes out mindfully.”¹⁴ Meditation can take many forms, including mindfulness meditation, loving-kindness meditation, transcendental meditation, and others, but all share the common goal of training the mind to achieve a deeper sense of focus, tranquility, and clarity. When practiced regularly, mindfulness and meditation contribute significantly to the cultivation of inner peace by helping individuals quiet their minds, become more self-aware, and develop greater emotional resilience.

Together, these practices serve as powerful tools in reducing the mental and emotional clutter that often leads to anxiety, stress, and interpersonal conflict. By regularly practicing mindfulness and meditation, individuals can create a mental environment that is conducive to peace, cultivating both inner stillness and a greater sense of connection to the world around them.

3.1. The science behind mindfulness and meditation

Over the past few decades, research into mindfulness and meditation has grown substantially, revealing the profound impact these practices have on the brain, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. One of the key findings from neuroscience is that mindfulness and meditation can rewire

¹³ *Dhammapada* 282.

¹⁴ *Dīgha Nikāya* 22 (*Mahāsātipaṭṭhana Sutta*), from the Pali Canons, Theravada Buddhism.

the brain, enhancing areas associated with self-regulation, emotional control, and empathy. Research shows that mindfulness and meditation can rewire neural pathways to enhance self-regulation, emotional control, and empathy, a process that echoes the Buddha's teaching, "Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without."¹⁵

Furthermore, research has shown that mindfulness can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, often referred to as the "rest and digest" system, which counters the "fight or flight" response associated with stress. This activation promotes a state of relaxation, helping to reduce heart rate, lower blood pressure, and alleviate the physical symptoms of anxiety and tension. Such physiological changes are indicative of how mindfulness and meditation can lead to greater emotional stability and a sense of inner calm, allowing individuals to better navigate the stresses of modern life.

In terms of emotional regulation, mindfulness practices have been found to reduce rumination, the repetitive and often negative thought patterns that contribute to stress and anxiety. By cultivating awareness of the present moment, individuals can break free from the cycle of negative thinking, allowing them to experience more positive emotions and a greater sense of peace.

Moreover, meditation has been shown to enhance empathy and compassion. By fostering a deeper understanding of one's own emotions and the emotions of others, mindfulness and meditation contribute to improved social interactions and greater emotional intelligence key elements in fostering harmonious relationships and promoting global peace.

3.2. Mindfulness as a pathway to inner peace

Mindfulness is more than just a technique; it is a way of life that can transform how individuals relate to their thoughts, emotions, and surroundings. Mindfulness involves paying deliberate attention to the present moment without judgment, allowing individuals to experience life as it is, without being overwhelmed by their internal narratives or external distractions. This shift in perspective can lead to profound changes in how one experiences the world and responds to stress.¹⁶

A foundational component of mindfulness is the practice of non-judgmental awareness. Often, individuals become trapped in patterns of judgment, categorizing experiences as "good" or "bad," which leads to emotional reactivity. For example, a negative event may trigger feelings of frustration or anger, while a positive event may lead to attachment and desire. Mindfulness invites individuals to observe their thoughts and emotions as they arise, without getting caught up in them or allowing them to dictate their actions.¹⁷ This process of non-judgmental awareness allows individuals to

¹⁵ Holzel, B. K., Lazar, S. W., Gard, T., Schuman- Olivier, Z., Vago, D. R., & Ott, U. (2011), *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 537 – 559.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 5.

¹⁷ Holzel, B. K., Lazar, S. W., Gard, T., Schuman- Olivier, Z., Vago, D. R., & Ott, U.

develop a more peaceful relationship with their inner experiences, enabling them to maintain a sense of calm even during challenging situations.

One of the most powerful aspects of mindfulness is its ability to reduce stress and anxiety. Mindfulness practices such as focusing on the breath, body scanning, and mindful walking help individuals connect with their bodies and cultivate a sense of presence in the moment. By bringing attention to the breath and bodily sensations, individuals can anchor themselves in the present, reducing the tendency to ruminate on past events or worry about future outcomes. This can help lower levels of cortisol, the hormone associated with stress, and promote a greater sense of inner peace.

Mindfulness also encourages a shift from a reactive mode of living to a more proactive and intentional approach. Instead of being swept away by emotional impulses or external events, individuals become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, enabling them to respond thoughtfully and with greater clarity. This sense of control over one's reactions is a key component of inner peace, as it empowers individuals to break free from the cycle of emotional reactivity and cultivate a stable, calm, and balanced state of mind.

3.3. Meditation - deepening the practice of inner peace

While mindfulness can be practiced in daily life, meditation offers a more structured and intensive approach to cultivating inner peace. Meditation involves setting aside time to engage in focused contemplation or concentration, often to quiet the mind and deepen awareness. While there are many types of meditation, each with its specific techniques and goals, all forms of meditation share the intention of achieving greater mental clarity, emotional stability, and spiritual insight.

One of the most widely practiced forms of meditation is mindfulness meditation, which involves paying attention to the present moment and observing thoughts and sensations without judgment. In mindfulness meditation, practitioners typically focus on their breath, noticing the rise and fall of each inhalation and exhalation. This simple yet profound practice trains the mind to remain focused and centered, promoting relaxation and clarity.¹⁸

Transcendental Meditation (TM) is another meditation technique that has been shown to promote inner peace. TM involves the repetition of a specific sound or mantra, which helps the practitioner enter a deep state of relaxation and mental stillness. Studies have shown that TM reduces stress, improves cognitive functioning, and promotes overall well-being.¹⁹ By training the mind

(2011). How Does Mindfulness Meditation Work? Proposing Mechanisms of Action from a Conceptual and Neural Perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, p. 129.

¹⁸ Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of Mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62 (3), 373 – 386.

¹⁹ Orme-Johnson, D. W., & Barnes, V. A. (2014). Effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique on trait anxiety: A meta- analysis. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 349 – 361.

to transcend the constant stream of thoughts and achieve a state of restful alertness, TM practitioners can cultivate a profound sense of inner peace and balance.

3.4. The role of mindfulness and meditation in global peace

The benefits of mindfulness and meditation extend beyond individual well-being. As individuals cultivate inner peace, they become better equipped to contribute to social harmony and global peace. Mindfulness and meditation promote qualities such as empathy, emotional regulation, and non-reactivity, all of which are essential for building harmonious relationships and resolving conflicts peacefully. Buddha's teachings emphasize that cultivating mindfulness and meditation fosters a non-reactive, compassionate mind, qualities that underpin empathy and emotional regulation. For example, the *Dhammapada* states, "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule."²⁰

At the interpersonal level, mindfulness and meditation help individuals navigate disagreements and challenges with greater compassion and understanding. By fostering a sense of non-judgmental awareness, these practices encourage people to listen deeply to others, seek common ground, and engage in peaceful communication. Furthermore, as individuals cultivate emotional intelligence through mindfulness and meditation, they are better able to manage their own emotions and respond thoughtfully to the emotions of others, reducing the likelihood of conflict.

On a larger scale, mindfulness and meditation can contribute to peace-building efforts in communities and societies. In conflict zones, mindfulness-based interventions have been used to reduce tension, foster reconciliation, and promote dialogue. For example, peace-building organizations have implemented mindfulness programs in post-conflict societies, helping individuals heal from trauma, reduce intergroup hostility, and develop greater empathy for others.

Mindfulness and meditation are powerful tools for cultivating inner peace, offering individuals practical ways to reduce stress, enhance emotional regulation, and foster a deeper connection to themselves and others. By promoting awareness, acceptance, and compassion, these practices provide a pathway to emotional resilience.

IV. DEFINING COMPASSION AND EMPATHY

Compassion and empathy are two interconnected emotional capacities that are crucial for cultivating inner peace. While they are often used interchangeably, each term represents a distinct but complementary quality.

Compassion refers to the emotional response to the suffering of others, combined with a genuine desire to alleviate that suffering. It is often characterized by feelings of warmth, concern, and a willingness to take action to

²⁰ Buddha. (1969). *The Dhammapada* (Narada Thera, trans.) [Verse 5]. Buddhist Publication Society, p. 367.

help others in their time of need. Compassion goes beyond simply recognizing or understanding the suffering of others; it is accompanied by a motivation to reduce that suffering in some way, whether through direct action or emotional support. Compassion is deeply rooted in the human experience and can be expressed through simple acts of kindness, understanding, and generosity.²¹

Empathy, on the other hand, is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It involves not just an intellectual understanding of someone else's emotions but also an emotional resonance with their experience. Empathy allows individuals to feel another person's pain, joy, or frustration as though it were their own, creating a deep sense of connection and mutual understanding. Empathy is often considered the foundation of compassion because it enables individuals to connect with others on a profound emotional level, motivating compassionate action.²²

Both compassion and empathy are essential for cultivating inner peace because they encourage emotional openness, reduce self-centered thinking, and foster a sense of connection with others.²³ In a world that often encourages individualism and competition, cultivating these qualities can be a transformative experience, leading to a more harmonious internal world and, by extension, a more peaceful external world.

4.1. The psychological and physiological benefits of compassion and empathy

Research into the psychological and physiological effects of compassion and empathy has revealed their profound impact on mental health, emotional well-being, and social relationships. Studies have shown that compassion and empathy not only promote positive emotions but also activate neural circuits associated with pleasure, reward, and social bonding.

One of the most significant discoveries in this area comes from neuroscience, where research has demonstrated that acts of compassion trigger the release of neurochemicals such as oxytocin and endorphins, which are associated with feelings of happiness, connection, and relaxation. Oxytocin, often referred to as the "love hormone," is released when individuals engage in compassionate acts, whether by helping others, expressing care, or simply offering a listening ear. This chemical release can lower blood pressure, reduce stress, and promote feelings of safety and trust, both for the giver and the receiver of compassion. This biological response highlights how cultivating compassion not only promotes inner peace but also contributes to physical health and emotional resilience.

²¹ Neff, K. D. (2003). Self-Compassion: An Alternative Conceptualization of a Healthy Attitude Toward Oneself. *Self and Identity*, 2 (2), 85 – 101.

²² Decety, J., & Cowell, J. M. (2014). Friends or foes: Is empathy necessary for moral behaviour? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9 (5), 525 – 537.

²³ Gilbert, P. (2014). The Origins and Nature of Compassion Focused Therapy. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 53 (1), 6 – 41.

Moreover, empathy has been shown to increase feelings of social connectedness. Studies suggest that individuals who practice empathy are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and community, which fosters emotional stability and overall well-being. “When a person is generous, virtuous, and cultivates a mind of loving-kindness, they experience social harmony, are dear to others, and live with a peaceful mind.”²⁴ When people feel understood and supported, they are more likely to experience a sense of security and peace within themselves. This sense of connectedness is crucial not only for personal peace but also for social harmony, as it reduces feelings of isolation, alienation, and conflict.

4.2. Compassionate practices - cultivating a peaceful heart and mind

While compassion is often seen as an innate quality, it is also a skill that can be cultivated through practice. Compassionate practices, such as loving-kindness meditation, self-compassion, and acts of service, are effective ways to enhance one’s capacity for compassion and empathy, thereby promoting inner peace.

Loving-kindness meditation (*Metta* meditation) is a powerful tool for cultivating compassion. In this practice, individuals focus on sending thoughts of love, kindness, and goodwill to themselves and others, beginning with loved ones and extending to neutral individuals, difficult people, and even all beings. By regularly practicing loving-kindness meditation, individuals can increase their capacity for empathy and compassion, transforming their internal emotional landscape and creating a sense of peace and connection. Studies have shown that loving-kindness meditation can reduce negative emotions such as anger, fear, and resentment while enhancing feelings of compassion and joy.²⁵

Self-compassion, a term popularized by psychologist Kristin Neff,²⁶ is another important practice for cultivating inner peace. Self-compassion involves treating oneself with the same kindness, care, and understanding that one would offer to a friend in times of suffering. Rather than engaging in self-criticism or judgment, individuals practicing self-compassion respond to their own mistakes, shortcomings, and difficulties with patience, understanding, and support. Self-compassion has been shown to improve emotional resilience, reduce anxiety and depression, and promote greater overall well-being.²⁷ By developing self-compassion, individuals can foster a peaceful relationship with themselves, free from the harsh judgments and inner conflict that often prevent inner peace.

In addition to meditation and self-compassion, acts of service are also effective ways to cultivate compassion. When individuals engage in selfless acts,

²⁴ *Samyutta Nikāya* 55.7 (*Kimattha Sutta*), from the Pali Canon, Theravada Buddhism.

²⁵ Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95 (5), 1045 – 1062.

²⁶ Kristin Neff. *Self- Compassion*. <https://self-compassion.org/>

²⁷ Neff, K. D. (2011). Self-compassion, Self-esteem, and well- being. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5 (1), 1 – 12.

such as helping others in need, volunteering, or offering emotional support, they not only reduce the suffering of others but also increase their sense of purpose and connection. Acts of kindness stimulate positive emotions, which in turn contribute to a sense of peace and fulfillment.²⁸

4.3. Empathy and compassion in conflict resolution

Compassion and empathy are essential tools in resolving conflicts, both internally and externally. When individuals approach conflicts with empathy, they are better able to understand the perspectives and emotions of others, which foster more constructive and peaceful resolutions. By putting oneself in the shoes of another person, it becomes easier to find common ground and de-escalate tensions, creating opportunities for reconciliation and mutual understanding.

In interpersonal conflicts, empathetic listening can significantly reduce hostility and open the door to peaceful dialogue. For example, when two people are engaged in a disagreement, taking the time to listen actively and empathize with each other's concerns can help both parties feel heard and validated. This can lead to a greater willingness to compromise, cooperate, and find mutually beneficial solutions.

On a larger scale, compassion and empathy are vital for resolving societal and global conflicts. In areas of political or ethnic conflict, cultivating empathy can promote reconciliation between divided communities. Empathy-based interventions, such as peace-building programs in post-conflict societies, have been shown to help individuals and groups move beyond past grievances and work towards mutual understanding and co-existence.

Moreover, compassionate leadership plays a key role in resolving conflicts at the international level. Leaders who approach diplomacy with compassion and empathy are better able to navigate complex geopolitical issues and find solutions that prioritize the well-being of all parties involved. Compassionate leadership is characterized by a deep understanding of the perspectives and needs of others, a commitment to non-violence, and a focus on long-term peace and cooperation. Leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama have demonstrated how compassion and empathy can be powerful tools in fostering peace on both a personal and global scale.

4.4. The social impact of compassion and empathy - creating a culture of peace

Compassion and empathy not only contribute to individual inner peace but also have a ripple effect that can transform entire communities and societies. When compassion and empathy are cultivated on a large scale, they can create a culture of peace where individuals work together to promote social justice, reduce inequality, and address the needs of the marginalized.²⁹ Such a culture

²⁸ Post, S. G. (2005). Altruism, happiness, and health: It's good to be good. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 12 (2), 66 – 77.

²⁹ Goetz, J. L., Keltner, D., & Simon-Thomas, E. (2010). Compassion: An Evolutionary Analysis and Empirical Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136 (3), 351 – 374.

fosters solidarity, cooperation, and mutual respect, laying the foundation for a peaceful and harmonious society.

Educational programs focused on developing empathy and compassion are increasingly being implemented in schools, workplaces, and communities worldwide. These programs aim to teach individuals, especially young people, the importance of understanding and caring for others, cultivating a mindset that values connection over division.³⁰ By fostering empathy from an early age, societies can create future generations of individuals who are better equipped to navigate conflicts peacefully and contribute to the common good.

Compassion and empathy are essential qualities for cultivating inner peace, and they play a crucial role in resolving conflicts and building peaceful societies. By developing and practicing compassion and empathy, individuals can create a more harmonious internal world, reduce emotional reactivity, and foster a deep sense of connection with others. On a broader note, these qualities contribute to the creation of peaceful communities and a global culture of peace.³¹

V. INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND INNER PEACE

Buddhist philosophy has long been a source of profound wisdom on the nature of the mind, emotions, and the path to lasting peace. Rooted in the teachings of *Siddhartha Gautama*, the Buddha, who lived approximately 2,500 years ago, Buddhism offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the sources of human suffering and provides practical tools for cultivating peace, both within the individual and in society. At its core, Buddhist philosophy is concerned with the nature of suffering (*dukkha*), its causes, and how individuals can overcome it through wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline.³²

In Buddhist thought, the cultivation of inner peace is not an abstract ideal but a practical, achievable goal. The path to inner peace is deeply interconnected with the cultivation of mindfulness, compassion, ethical behavior, and wisdom.³³ By embracing Buddhist principles such as the four noble truths and the eightfold path, individuals can overcome the mental afflictions that create suffering, such as attachment, aversion, and ignorance, and instead develop a state of inner tranquility and equanimity.

5.1. The Four Noble Truths - the foundation of Buddhist philosophy:

The Four Noble Truths form the foundation of Buddhist philosophy and provide a clear framework for understanding the nature of suffering and how

³⁰ Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Lawlor, M. S. (2010). The effects of a mindfulness-based education program on pre- and early adolescents' well-being and social and emotional competence. *Mindfulness*, 1 (3), 137 – 151.

³¹ Rifkin, J. (2009). *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis*. New York: Tarcher/ Penguin, p. 65.

³² Rahula, W. (1974). *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, p. 32.

³³ Gethin, R. (1998). *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 56.

to overcome it. These truths are:

5.1.1. The truth of suffering (*dukkha*):

This first truth acknowledges the existence of suffering in life, including physical pain, emotional distress, and existential dissatisfaction. It also points out that suffering is an inherent part of the human condition, which manifests in many forms, whether as direct pain or as the subtle unease of impermanence, uncertainty, and unfulfilled desires. However, the recognition of suffering is not meant to be pessimistic but rather a realistic and honest acknowledgment of life as it is.

5.1.2. The truth of the cause of suffering (*samudaya*):

According to Buddhism, suffering arises due to ignorance (*avidya*) and craving (*tanha*). Ignorance refers to a lack of understanding of the true nature of reality, while craving refers to our attachment to transient experiences, people, and material possessions. These desires create a cycle of attachment and aversion, leading to suffering. The Buddha taught that the root of all suffering lies in the delusion that things are permanent and that our desires can be fully satisfied.

5.1.3. The truth of the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*):

The third noble truth teaches that it is possible to end suffering. By letting go of attachment and ignorance, one can attain a state of inner peace known as *nirvāṇa* - a state of liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (*saṃsāra*). *Nirvāṇa* is often described as the cessation of suffering and the realization of the true nature of reality, free from the distortions of the ego and cravings.

5.1.4. The truth of the path to the cessation of suffering (*magga*):

The Fourth Noble Truth outlines the path to end suffering, the noble eightfold path. This path is a systematic approach to personal transformation and consists of eight practices that guide ethical behavior, mental discipline, and wisdom. These practices are intended to be cultivated together, as each one supports and reinforces the others. The eightfold path includes:

(1) Right Understanding: The understanding of the nature of suffering, its causes, and the path to its cessation.

(2) Right Intention: Cultivating intentions of kindness, compassion, and non-harm.

(3) Right Speech: Speaking truthfully, kindly, and with integrity.

(4) Right Action: Acting ethically, avoiding harm, and living with compassion.

(5) Right Livelihood: Earning a living in a way that does not harm others.

(6) Right Effort: Cultivating wholesome mental states and overcoming negative mental states.

(7) Right Mindfulness: Developing awareness and attention to the present moment.

(8) Right Concentration: Developing deep concentration through meditation practices.

The noble eightfold path provides a practical guide to cultivating inner peace by training the mind and body to align with ethical principles and wisdom. It encourages individuals to develop a balanced life, where their actions, thoughts, and intentions are in harmony to reduce suffering and cultivate peace.

5.2. Mindfulness and meditation in Buddhist philosophy

Mindfulness and meditation are central practices in Buddhist philosophy that directly contribute to cultivating inner peace. The practice of mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment with non-judgmental awareness, observing thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they arise, and recognizing them as transient phenomena.³⁴ By developing mindfulness, individuals can cultivate a deep sense of awareness that helps them navigate the challenges of life with greater clarity and equanimity.

The *Satipatthana Sutta* (Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness) provides a detailed guide to mindfulness practice in Buddhism.³⁵ It outlines four main objects of mindfulness:

(1) Mindfulness of the body: Focusing on bodily sensations, posture, and the breath to develop a deep sense of awareness and presence.

(2) Mindfulness of feelings: Observing emotional responses without attachment or aversion, allowing them to arise and pass without clinging.

(3) Mindfulness of the mind: Observing mental states (such as desire, anger, or confusion) with awareness and detachment, recognizing them as impermanent.

(4) Mindfulness of mental objects: Observing the content of the mind, such as thoughts, ideas, and concepts, with discernment and insight.

Through consistent mindfulness practice, individuals can break free from the cycle of reactivity and attachment that creates suffering. By simply observing thoughts and emotions without identifying with them, practitioners can reduce the power that these mental states have over their well-being. This reduction in mental turbulence fosters a state of calm and tranquility, which is essential for inner peace.³⁶

Buddhist meditation practices, particularly *vipassanā* (insight meditation) and *samatha* (calm- abiding meditation), are powerful tools for deepening mindfulness and cultivating inner peace. *Vipassana* meditation involves

³⁴ Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144 – 156.

³⁵ Thera, N. (1962). *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness*. London: Rider & Co., p. 78.

³⁶ Gunaratana, B. H. (2002). *Mindfulness in Plain English*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, p. 45.

observing the impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) nature of all phenomena, which leads to the realization of the true nature of existence.³⁷ By understanding the transient and interconnected nature of all things, individuals can develop detachment and reduce attachment to the fleeting pleasures of the material world.

5.3. The concept of non-attachment and its role in inner peace:

One of the most important teachings in Buddhism for cultivating inner peace is the concept of non-attachment (*anatta*). According to Buddhist philosophy, attachment is the root of suffering, as it leads to fear, anxiety, and disappointment when the objects of attachment are inevitably lost or change.³⁸

Non-attachment does not mean indifference or withdrawal from the world; rather, it refers to a mindset of detachment from the ego and the understanding that all things are impermanent. By recognizing the impermanence of life and embracing change, individuals can free themselves from the anxiety and suffering.³⁹

5.4. Non-violence and ethical conduct in Buddhism:

At the heart of Buddhist philosophy lies the principle of *ahimsa*, or nonviolence, which is not only central to individual ethical conduct but also to the cultivation of world peace. In Buddhism, nonviolence goes beyond the mere absence of physical harm; it encompasses mental, verbal, and emotional dimensions as well. The Buddha's teachings on ethical conduct provide a practical and spiritual framework for reducing harm and promoting peace within oneself and in the world at large. These ethical guidelines are embedded in the five precepts for lay practitioners and the *vinaya* for monastics, which together form the ethical foundation of the Buddhist path.⁴⁰

5.5. *Ahimsa* - The centrality of nonviolence in Buddhist ethics

The concept of *ahimsa* (non-violence) in Buddhism is often seen as the cornerstone of moral behavior. The Buddha taught that the root cause of violence is ignorance (*avidya*) and the delusion of self-centeredness, which creates division between oneself and others.⁴¹ *Ahimsa* is based on the recognition that all beings possess inherent value and that the infliction of harm, whether through physical violence, harsh words, or harmful intentions, only perpetuates suffering.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha famously states:

“Victory breeds hatred. The defeated live in pain. Happily, the peaceful life,

37 Goldstein, J. (2013). *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening*. Boulder: Sounds True, p. 90.

38 Rahula, W. (1974). *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, p. 63 – 98.

39 Gethin, R. (1998). *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 68.

40 Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 102.

41 Keown, D. (2005). *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

giving up victory and defeat.”⁴²

This teaching underscores the idea that violence, whether in the form of physical aggression or mental anger, only fosters more suffering and conflict. True peace arises not through dominance or retaliation but through understanding, kindness, and the cessation of harm. Buddhist nonviolence calls for a radical shift in how individuals view and treat others. It challenges the instinct to retaliate or defend, urging practitioners to recognize the interconnectedness of all beings and act with compassion and equanimity.

In this context, ahimsa is a dynamic force that requires not only refraining from harmful actions but also cultivating positive intentions. Buddhists believe that ethical conduct arises from a deep understanding of the interdependent nature of all beings, which teaches that any harm inflicted on others ultimately harms oneself as well.

5.6. The five precepts - Ethical guidelines

In Buddhism, ethical conduct is structured around the five precepts (*pañca-sīla*), which provide a moral compass for lay practitioners. These precepts are:

(1) To refrain from killing any living being: This precept emphasizes the value of life and the interconnectedness of all living beings. Practitioners are encouraged to cultivate compassion and to avoid actions that cause harm or take life, whether human or animal.⁴³

(2) To refrain from stealing: Stealing is considered a violation of trust and respect for others' rights and property. This precept encourages individuals to practice honesty, generosity, and integrity in their dealings with others.⁴⁴

(3) To refrain from sexual misconduct: Sexual ethics in Buddhism emphasize respect for others' boundaries, consent, and the avoidance of harm in sexual relationships. This precept promotes the cultivation of mindfulness and responsibility in one's sexual conduct.⁴⁵

(4) To refrain from false speech: This precept covers lying, gossip, slander, and harsh speech, which can cause harm to others. It encourages the practice of truthful, kind, and meaningful communication, which fosters trust and understanding.⁴⁶

(5) To refrain from intoxicants: Intoxicants, which can impair judgment and lead to reckless behavior, are seen as obstacles to mindfulness and clear thinking. This precept encourages individuals to maintain a clear mind and to avoid

⁴² Dhammapada 201.

⁴³ Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 120.

⁴⁴ Keown, D. (2005). *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 123.

⁴⁵ Saddhatissa, H. (1997). *Buddhist Ethics: The Path to Nirvana*. London: Wisdom Publications, p. 74.

⁴⁶ Bodhi, B. (2011). *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 321.

substances that disrupt mental clarity.⁴⁷

The five precepts are not commandments but guidelines for ethical living that help individuals live harmoniously with themselves and others. By adhering to these precepts, practitioners work to cultivate non-violence, reduce suffering, and promote peace in their personal lives. The ethical behavior encouraged by the five precepts also creates an environment where mutual respect, trust, and compassion can flourish, contributing to a peaceful and harmonious society.⁴⁸

5.7. The role of compassion (*karuna*) and loving-kindness (*metta*) in non-violence:

Buddhism teaches that non-violence is inseparable from the cultivation of compassion (*karuna*) and loving-kindness (*metta*). Compassion involves feeling the suffering of others and desiring to alleviate it, while loving-kindness is the wish for all beings to experience happiness and well-being.⁴⁹

A *Bodhisattva* is someone who, upon attaining the wisdom of enlightenment, chooses to remain in the world to help all beings attain liberation. This vow illustrates the deep interconnection between nonviolence, compassion, and the pursuit of world peace.

Loving-kindness meditation (*metta bhāvanā*) is a key practice for cultivating nonviolence and compassion. In this meditation, practitioners generate feelings of love and goodwill, first towards themselves, then towards loved ones, neutral individuals, and even those with whom they have conflicts. The practice fosters a deep sense of interconnectedness, which in turn reduces the desire to harm others and increases the ability to respond with compassion in difficult situations.

Compassion and loving-kindness not only create an inner sense of peace but also promote external peace by helping individuals transcend the boundaries of self-interest and ego. When one practices loving-kindness and compassion, it naturally leads to the cessation of harmful actions, including violence, and nurtures a world where peace can flourish.

5.8. The middle path- balance and non-excess:

The Buddha's teaching of the middle path offers valuable guidance for ethical conduct and non-violence. The middle path encourages individuals to avoid the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, advocating instead for a balanced approach to life. This balance is not just about physical pleasures or ascetic practices but also about mental and emotional well-being.

In the context of non-violence, the middle path urges practitioners to avoid

⁴⁷ Gombrich, R. F. (2006). *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*. London: Routledge, p. 32.

⁴⁸ Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 107.

⁴⁹ Salzberg, S. (1995). *Loving-Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, p. 115.

excesses in their thoughts, speech, and actions. It encourages moderation in the pursuit of desires, passions, and reactions, which are often the root causes of conflict and violence. By practicing moderation, individuals can avoid the harmful tendencies of greed, anger, and ignorance, which lead to both personal and societal strife.

“A wise person, by reflection, abandons unwholesome thoughts and cultivates wholesome ones. In doing so, they free themselves from suffering.”⁵⁰ This supports the idea that moderation in thought and action helps individuals avoid greed, anger, and ignorance, which lead to suffering.

Through the middle path, Buddhists are taught to cultivate a sense of inner harmony and balance, which translates into peace and nonviolence in their external actions. This balanced approach to life, living ethically and mindfully, creates the conditions necessary for inner peace and contributes to the wider goal of world peace.

5.9. Non-violence and social harmony

Buddhism’s emphasis on right speech, right action, and right livelihood as part of the noble eightfold path offers a practical framework for non-violent living. “And what, *Bhikkhus*, is the noble eightfold path? It is this: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.”⁵¹ These aspects of ethical conduct help individuals promote harmony in their communities and foster peaceful relations in the wider world.

(1) Right speech: In Buddhist practice, speech is not just about telling the truth but also about speaking in ways that promote peace and harmony. Right speech includes avoiding slander, gossip, harsh words, and lying, all of which create division, mistrust, and conflict. By cultivating speech that is truthful, kind, and beneficial, individuals contribute to a culture of respect and operation.⁵²

(2) Right action: Right action involves refraining from harm and promoting ethical conduct through physical actions. This includes not killing, stealing, or engaging in harmful sexual behavior. Right action promotes integrity and respect for others, fostering a peaceful and just society.⁵³

(3) Right livelihood: Right livelihood encourages individuals to earn a living in ways that do not cause harm to others or exploit the environment. This includes avoiding professions that involve violence, deception, or exploitation, such as trading in weapons, human trafficking, or causing harm to animals. Right livelihood emphasizes the importance of ethical work practices and living in a

⁵⁰ *Majjhima Nikaya* 20 (*Vitakkasāṇṭhana Sutta*).

⁵¹ *Samyutta Nikaya* 45.8 (*Magga-vibhaṅga Sutta*).

⁵² Bodhi, B. (2011). *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 123.

⁵³ Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 90.

way that supports the well-being of all.⁵⁴

By following these principles, individuals contribute to a society where nonviolence, fairness, and mutual respect are valued, and where conflicts are addressed through dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation rather than violence or coercion.⁵⁵

5.10. Non-violence in conflict resolution - Buddhist approaches to peace-building:

Buddhist philosophy offers valuable insights into conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Central to Buddhist conflict resolution is the idea of dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation.⁵⁶ In Buddhist teachings, the key to resolving conflicts lies not in defeating or overpowering the opponent but in understanding their perspective and addressing the underlying causes of suffering.

The Buddhist approach to conflict resolution is embodied in the principles of compassionate listening and non-reactivity. When engaging in conflict, a Buddhist approach would focus on listening deeply to the other person's point of view without judgment or defensiveness. This empathetic approach creates space for mutual understanding and lays the foundation for finding common ground. Additionally, non-reactivity means not being driven by emotions such as anger, fear, or frustration but responding with patience and wisdom.⁵⁷

Buddhist peacebuilding also emphasizes the role of forgiveness, where individuals are encouraged to release grudges, let go of anger, and seek to restore harmony. This process of reconciliation, grounded in nonviolence, helps to heal relationships, and promote long-term peace.⁵⁸

5.11. Non-violence as the path to world peace

Non-violence and ethical conduct are integral to both personal and societal peace in Buddhist philosophy. By practicing ahimsa, cultivating compassion and loving-kindness, and adhering to ethical guidelines like the five precepts, individuals contribute to a peaceful, harmonious society. Buddhist teachings encourage a shift in how we view others, recognizing their inherent value and interconnectedness, and challenge us to live in ways that reduce suffering and promote mutual respect.

Buddhism offers profound insights into the cultivation of inner peace and the creation of a world free from violence. Through nonviolence, ethical conduct, and compassionate action, we can begin to heal not only ourselves

⁵⁴ Keown, D. (2005). *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 142.

⁵⁵ Rahula, W. (1974). *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, p. 23.

⁵⁶ Galtung, J. (2003). *Buddhism and Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. In *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: Sage Publications, p. 342.

⁵⁷ Hanh, T. N. (2006). *The Art of Communicating*. New York: HarperOne, p. 98.

⁵⁸ Kraft, K. (1992). *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 74.

but also the world around us, paving the way for a future rooted in peace, justice, and understanding.

5.12. The need for global peace in the modern world

In the modern world, the challenges of war, political conflict, environmental degradation, and social inequality often seem insurmountable. Despite the increasing interconnectedness of global societies, the path to lasting peace remains elusive. Traditional methods of diplomacy, economic sanctions, and military intervention have often failed to resolve conflicts in a way that promotes true, long-lasting peace. In this context, Buddhist philosophy offers a profound, alternative approach to peacebuilding, rooted not only in individual transformation but also in collective harmony.

Buddhist philosophy, with its emphasis on mindfulness, compassion, nonviolence, and interdependence, provides practical tools that can be applied to both personal and global peace efforts. From conflict resolution to environmental sustainability, the principles found in Buddhist teachings offer relevant and effective pathways to address the root causes of violence, suffering, and disharmony on a global scale.

VI. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION - BUDDHIST APPROACHES TO DIPLOMACY

One of the most significant areas where Buddhist philosophy can be applied to global peace is in the realm of conflict resolution and diplomacy. The traditional methods of addressing international disputes- through military force, sanctions, or coercion- often exacerbate tensions and prolong suffering. In contrast, Buddhist teachings emphasize dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation as the core strategies for resolving conflict.⁵⁹

Right speech, as outlined in the noble eightfold path, is particularly relevant in the context of diplomacy. Right speech involves speaking truthfully, kindly, and in a way that fosters understanding. In international conflicts, this principle can guide leaders and diplomats toward communication that prioritizes mutual respect and clarity, rather than rhetoric that inflames division or exacerbates misunderstandings.⁶⁰ Buddhist principles encourage negotiators to speak with the intention of healing divisions, addressing root causes of conflict, and promoting co-operation, rather than winning the argument or gaining political leverage.

The Buddhist concept of compassionate listening (or “deep listening”) is a powerful tool in conflict resolution. Intense political or international environments, compassionate listening involves not just hearing the words spoken by the opposing party but deeply empathizing with their underlying

⁵⁹ Galtung, J. (2003). Buddhism and Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice. In *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: Sage Publications, p. 98.

⁶⁰ Bodhi, B. (2011). *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 98.

concerns, fears, and hopes.⁶¹ By understanding the emotional and psychological motivations of all parties involved, it becomes possible to seek common ground and create solutions that benefit everyone, rather than just one side.

A practical example of applying Buddhist principles to conflict resolution can be found in the Sri Lankan peace process. During the years of intense conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government, Buddhist leaders and practitioners engaged in efforts to promote reconciliation. Buddhist teachings on nonviolence, compassion, and forgiveness were instrumental in fostering dialogue between warring parties, even though peace was not fully achieved. The Buddhist approach was not to impose a solution but to invite participants to consider the suffering of all involved and seek paths of mutual healing.⁶²

6.1. Transforming violence through compassion - Buddhist approaches to social justice

A significant component of Buddhist philosophy is the cultivation of compassion and the practice of non-violence in both personal and social contexts. In Buddhist thought, violence arises not only from physical aggression but from the more subtle forms of harm, including hatred, anger, greed, and ignorance. These negative mental states, if left unchecked, can perpetuate cycles of social injustice, inequality, and global conflict.⁶³

Buddhist approaches to social justice emphasize the importance of addressing the root causes of suffering, such as poverty, inequality, and systemic violence, rather than simply treating the symptoms. This is where Buddhist economics and social activism intersect with global peacebuilding efforts. Rather than promoting a model of success based on material accumulation or competition, Buddhist economics calls for an economy based on mutual care, sustainability, and the recognition of the interconnectedness of all beings.⁶⁴

In the realm of environmental justice, Buddhist philosophy offers practical guidance through its teachings on interdependence and the impermanence of all phenomena. These principles encourage a view of the world where human beings recognize their responsibility to live in harmony with the Earth, rather than exploiting it for short-term gain.⁶⁵ The interconnectedness of all beings calls for an ethic of care and sustainability that transcends national borders and economic interests.

⁶¹ Hanh, T. N. (2006). *The Art of Communicating*. New York: HarperOne, p. 101.

⁶² Deegalle, M. (2006). *Buddhism, Conflict, and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*. London: Routledge, p. 87.

⁶³ Salzberg, S. (1995). *Loving-Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, p. 39.

⁶⁴ Schumacher, E. F. (1973). *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*. London: Blond & Briggs, p. 112.

⁶⁵ Macy, J. (1991). *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 67.

Buddhist environmental activism, as exemplified by groups like the Earth Holder Sangha, calls for a shift from exploitative practices to mindful, compassionate approaches to ecological stewardship. This includes sustainable farming, reducing waste, and promoting policies that address climate change - not from a place of fear, but from an understanding of the shared suffering caused by environmental degradation. The Buddhist concept of *ahimsa* (non-violence) here extends to the environment, urging humanity to practice gentleness and respect toward the Earth, as all beings are part of the same interconnected web of life.

6.2. Buddhist engagement in promoting global peace

Another critical area where Buddhist philosophy can be practically applied to global peace is through interfaith dialogue and the promotion of religious tolerance. In a world where religious conflict continues to fuel wars and social division, the Buddhist approach to respectful dialogue can help bridge divides between different religious communities.

The Buddha's teachings emphasized respect for all forms of spiritual practice, recognizing that there are many paths to the truth. Buddhists traditionally adopt a position of openness to other religious traditions, viewing them as valid expressions of the human search for meaning and truth. "A person is not wise merely because they speak much. One who is peaceful, without hate and fearless, is truly called wise. A person is not just because they arbitrarily judge; the wise person considers both right and wrong."⁶⁶

Buddhist engagement in interfaith dialogue often emphasizes the universal values shared by all religious traditions, such as compassion, justice, love, and peace. In this spirit, Buddhist leaders like the Dalai Lama have been at the forefront of promoting interfaith dialogue, fostering a sense of global solidarity and peace. The Dalai Lama's approach to global peacebuilding emphasizes not only religious tolerance but the idea that peace can only be achieved when we move beyond religious boundaries and recognize our shared humanity.

In recent decades, Buddhist organizations have participated in international interfaith efforts such as the Parliament of the World's Religions and the Interfaith Harmony Week promoted by the United Nations. These platforms provide an opportunity for Buddhist teachings on peace, compassion, and mutual respect to be shared globally, fostering greater understanding and cooperation across different faiths and cultures.

6.3. Mindfulness-based peacebuilding - Buddhist practices in action

One of the most practical applications of Buddhist philosophy in modern society is using mindfulness-based interventions in peacebuilding efforts. Mindfulness meditation, which is rooted in Buddhist practice, has become a widely recognized tool for reducing stress, cultivating emotional intelligence, and promoting emotional and social well-being.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *Dhammapada* 256 - 257.

⁶⁷ Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). *Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and*

Mindfulness-based programs have been implemented in a variety of settings, from schools and prisons to conflict zones and refugee camps, showing significant promise in promoting individual and collective healing. For example, programs like Mindfulness-Based Conflict Resolution (MBCR) are being used in post-conflict regions to help individuals and communities heal from trauma, reduce aggression, and foster reconciliation.⁶⁸ Through mindfulness, individuals are taught to cultivate awareness of their emotions and reactions, allowing them to respond to conflict with greater clarity and compassion, rather than reacting with anger or violence.

In a global context, mindfulness practices have been applied in peacebuilding initiatives to help individuals and communities move beyond entrenched narratives of victimhood and revenge. By training people to observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment, mindfulness creates the space for empathy and understanding to emerge in situations where conflict had previously seemed insurmountable. This approach is particularly effective in addressing the root causes of violence, such as fear, misunderstanding, and trauma, and replacing them with practices of non-violence and peaceful engagement.⁶⁹

6.4. The role of Buddhist philosophy in sustainable development

Buddhist principles are also highly relevant to the growing field of sustainable development. The Buddhist understanding of impermanence and interdependence underscores the need for sustainable living practices.⁷⁰ Buddhist teachings encourage humanity to live in harmony with nature, recognizing that the well-being of all beings is interconnected.

From a Buddhist perspective, economic development that depletes natural resources and contributes to environmental degradation is fundamentally flawed because it ignores the principle of interdependence. Instead, Buddhist teachings advocate for a development model that respects ecological limits and fosters harmony between human beings and the natural world.⁷¹

Buddhist groups like the Buddhist Global Relief are working on initiatives that support sustainable farming, clean water projects, and environmental preservation, while also alleviating poverty and hunger. These efforts combine Buddhist ethics with practical solutions to address global challenges, demonstrating the power of Buddhist philosophy to promote sustainability and peace on a global scale.

Future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144 – 156.

⁶⁸ Hick, S. F., & Furlotte, C. (2009). Mindfulness and Social Justice Approaches: Bridging the Mind and Society in Social Work Practice. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 26(1), 5 – 24.

⁶⁹ Rosenberg, M. B. (2003). *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Encinitas: Puddle Dancer Press, p. 98.

⁷⁰ Macy, J. (1991). *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 35.

⁷¹ Schumacher, E. F. (1973). *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*. London: Blond & Briggs, p. 72.

VII. CONCLUSION - THE BUDDHIST PATH TO GLOBAL PEACE

Buddhist philosophy offers a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges of the modern world and creating a more peaceful, just, and sustainable future. By applying Buddhist principles of non-violence, compassion, interdependence, and mindfulness, individuals and communities can take significant steps toward global peace. Whether through conflict resolution, social justice, environmental sustainability, or interfaith dialogue, the teachings of the Buddha offer valuable insights into how we can transform both our inner lives and the world around us. This philosophy is the need of the day towards achieving the global peace.

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LIBERATION BY ‘SUBLIME DWELLING’ (BRAHMAVIHĀRA): THE WAY TO INNER AND EXTERNAL PEACE

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Abstract:

In 1963, as a student in Sarnath, a sacred Buddhist site, I witnessed the growing unrest in Vietnam, where Buddhist monks resorted to self-immolation in protest against the oppressive policies of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem. Despite Vietnam being a Buddhist-majority nation, Diem, a Catholic leader aligned with Western anti-Communist powers, actively suppressed Buddhists, banning religious flags, restricting temple construction, and censoring Buddhist literature. The crisis reached its peak when Buddhists were prohibited from displaying their flags during Vesak, leading to violent confrontations. In India, 1956 marked the grand 2500th anniversary of Buddhism under Prime Minister Nehru’s leadership. Nehru, deeply inspired by Buddhist philosophy, initiated major infrastructural developments at Bodh Gaya, Kushinagar, and Sarnath. The Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee, chaired by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, invited Tibetan leaders as chief guests. Another landmark event that year was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s mass conversion to Buddhism in Nagpur, where he and 360,000 followers embraced the faith at Diksha Bhumi. This historic event laid the foundation for the New Buddhist Movement in India. Tragically, Ambedkar passed away soon after, leaving behind a legacy of Buddhist resurgence. In this paper, I present my reflections on both these historical moments – the Buddhist crisis in Vietnam and the resurgence of Buddhism in India – based on personal observations, news reports, and scholarly interpretations.

Keywords: *Buddhism, liberation, inner peace, external peace.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Liberation (*vimutti*), a core Buddhist concept, encompasses various stages and forms of freedom from mental impurities. *Nibbāna*, the ultimate goal for Buddhists, is often described as ‘ultimate peace’ (*accanta-santi*) and represents liberation from mental defilements.¹ In this sense, ‘peace’ is deeply linked to the absence of afflictions like greed, hatred, and delusion. The related term, ‘*nibbuti*,’ which also means ‘peace,’ similarly reflects a mind that is free of unwholesome states.² From this perspective, ‘peace’ arises when mental afflictions are absent. When they emerge, the mind becomes disturbed and agitated.

Buddhism offers systematic methods to overcome defilements, which can be regarded as paths to achieving inner peace. For example, the path to attaining *Nibbāna* consists of the means to abandon mental afflictions. Among these practices, Sublime Dwelling (*brahmavihāra*) holds a prominent place. Sublime Dwelling consists of four states of mind: loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), unselfish delight (*muditā*), and neutrality (*upekkhā*). Developing these states aims to purify the mind by eliminating mental defilements rooted in hatred (*dosa*). The practice involving the development of these four states is aimed at purifying the mind by eliminating states rooted in hatred (*dosa*). Developing these states causes the mind to become peaceful by preventing or abandoning hatred and similar negative states.

This paper examines how Sublime Dwelling fosters inner peace by abandoning states of mind that are rooted in hatred. It also attempts to show how cultivating this practice extends to external peace, a natural outcome of inner peace. At an individual level, external peace is largely dependent upon one’s actions and behavior, which reflect one’s mental state. When negative states such as hatred persist in the mind, the mind loses inner peace. An individual who is not peaceful internally cannot foster peace externally. Therefore, the path to external peace begins with the cultivation of inner peace.

Drawing from Pali textual sources, this paper explores Buddhist practices that foster internal and external peace through Sublime Dwelling. For instance, morality (*sīla*), a key practice that is rooted in Sublime Dwelling, promotes inner peace by making oneself free from faulty actions. It also promotes external peace by engaging in actions that are grounded in Sublime Dwelling. The practice of Sublime Dwelling helps build a foundation for harmonious relationships and societal well-being. This study attempts to show that by cultivating Sublime Dwelling, individuals achieve inner peace and contribute to the peace of society and the world.

II. SUBLIME DWELLING (*BRAHMAVIHĀRA*)

The practices taught by the Buddha in the Pali texts can be generally

¹ Buddhaghosa Thera, *Suttanipāta Aṭṭhakathā* (*Paramatthajotikā*), vol. 1, p. 338; Buddhaghosa Thera, *The Suttanipāta: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha’s Discourses Together with Its Commentaries*, trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2017), p. 815.

² *Khuddakapāṭha Pāli*, p. 4.

classified as either morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), or wisdom (*paññā*). These three are often described as forms of training (*sikkhā*), a brief form of the Noble Eightfold Path. In their highest sense, these three training forms a path to *Nibbāna*, the ultimate goal aspired by Buddhists. With relation to this, the practice of Sublime Dwelling holds a distinctive role because it is related to the three trainings. It is directly related to morality and concentration and also supports wisdom.

The moral virtues recommended for Buddhists to follow, including monastics, are fundamentally rooted in Sublime Dwelling. In the Noble Eightfold Path, the Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*), Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*), and Right Livelihood (*sammāājīva*) are based on Sublime Dwelling.³ This is because major moral precepts and training rules involve avoiding harm to others – the core attitude of Sublime Dwelling. In many cases, texts explain Sublime Dwelling as the practice of morality. Furthermore, Sublime Dwelling aids in abandoning hindrances by directly opposing ill will (*byāpāda*),⁴ which is essential to attaining concentration. By undertaking Sublime Dwelling as a meditation practice, one can even attain deeper levels of concentration called 'absorption' (*jhāna*).⁵

The practice of Sublime Dwelling forms a vital part of the path to liberation. In the teachings of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path to liberation, it is represented by Right Thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*). Among the three types of thoughts represented by 'Right Thought,' the 'thought of non-ill will' (*abyāpāda-vitakka*) and 'thought of non-cruelty' (*avihiṃsā-vitakka*) are mental aspects of Sublime Dwelling.⁶ It is noteworthy that in the classification of trainings, Right Thought belongs to the wisdom group (*paññā-sikkhā*). This highlights that Sublime Dwelling is integral to all three trainings. Moreover, it is also included in the ten perfections that an individual aspiring to become a *Buddha* has to fulfill.⁷

In literature about Sublime Dwelling, the term '*brahma*' is interpreted in two ways: as associated with *Brahmā* divinity or as denoting 'excellent' or 'best.' For example, Rhys Davids links '*brahma*' to 'divine.'⁸ Ṭhanissaro Bhikkhu suggests that Sublime Dwelling represents the sublime attitudes of "beings who live in the higher heavenly worlds."⁹ Similarly, the *Comprehensive Manual of*

³ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Colombo: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 2006), pp.46 - 47.

⁴ *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*, *Majjhimanikāya*, vol.1, p.424; *Nīvaraṇappahānavagga*, *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, vol.1, p. 4.

⁵ Buddhaghosa Thera, *The Path of Purification*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Fifth (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1999), p. 305.

⁶ Piyadassi Thera, *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, 2nd ed. (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1979), p. 111.

⁷ *Path of Purification*, p. 320.

⁸ Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Sakya; or Buddhist Origins* (London: Broadway House, 1931), p. 218.

⁹ Bhikkhu Ṭhanissaro, *Sublime Attitudes* (California: Metta Forest Monastery, 2014), p. 4.

Abhidhamma states, “They are the mental dwellings of the Brahmā divinities in the Brahma-world.”¹⁰ By contrast, some scholars favor a simple interpretation. For example, Mahāsi Sayadaw describes ‘*brahmavihāra*’ solely as ‘noble,’ which is used as a synonym of ‘excellent.’¹¹ Venerable Nārada also explains *Brahma* similarly as ‘sublime.’¹² They avoid any reference to *Brahmā* divinity.

The commentaries of Pali texts support both interpretations. For example, in the *Visuddhimagga*, Venerable Buddhaghosa describes ‘*brahma*’ as meaning ‘best’ and ‘immaculate.’ He says, “Those who practice *brahmavihāra* live on an equal footing with *Brahmā* gods.”¹³ He further clarifies that it is in the sense of ‘faultlessness’ that the word ‘excellent’ is used. The minds of *Brahmā* deities are pure because they have abandoned mental hindrances. In this way, ‘best’ or ‘excellent’ reflects a state of purity. The interpretation of the commentary suggests that by practicing the Sublime Dwelling, one’s mind becomes excellent, which resembles the mind of *Brahmā* divinity. Drawing on this, Venerable Nyanaponika¹⁴ assigns two meanings to *brahma*: divine and excellent.

The ‘excellent’ or ‘best’ meaning of ‘*brahma*’ is elaborated in various ways within the sub-commentaries. Venerable Dhammapāla, the author of the sub-commentary on the *Visuddhimagga* commentary, interprets it in two ways. His first explanation aligns with the interpretation of ‘excellent’ given by Venerable Buddhaghosa. Second, he interprets ‘excellent’ as ‘excellent beings’ by relating the Sublime Dwelling to the practice to *Bodhisatta*, the beings who practice the perfections to become a fully Enlightened Buddha.¹⁵ Simply put, he views Sublime Dwelling as a key *Bodhisatta* practice. This interpretation is highlighted by Venerable Sumaṅgala in *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭikā*. He notes that ‘highest’ has two meanings: they are ‘highest forms of dwellings’ and ‘dwellings of the highest beings.’¹⁶

The term ‘*vihāra*’ appears in the Pali texts with several meanings. Two are noteworthy here. First, it denotes a ‘dwelling place’ for monks, such as a monastery. For example, in the sentence “*Bhagavā vihāre viharati*” (the Blessed

https://www.dhammadatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/TheSublimeAttitudes_181215.pdf.

¹⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi, ed., *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, Fourth (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2016), p. 336.

¹¹ Mahāsi Sayadaw, *Brahmavihāra Dhamma*, 4th ed. (Yangon: Buddhasasananuggaha Press, 1985), p. 1.

¹² Venerable Nārada Mahāthera, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 5th ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1979), p. 404.

¹³ *Path of Purification*, p. 314.

¹⁴ Nyanaponika Thera, *The Four Sublime States* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2008), p. 4. https://bps.lk/olib/wh/wh006_Nyanaponika_The-Four-Sublime-States.pdf.

¹⁵ Dhammapāla Thera, *Visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā*, vol.1, p. 384.

¹⁶ Bhaddanta Anuruddha and Bhaddanta Sumaṅgalasāmi, *Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma and Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma*, trans. R.P. Wijeratne and Rupert Gethin (London: Pali Text Society, 2002), p. 331.

One lives in monastery).¹⁷ The second usage is in the context of meditation practice, where '*vihāra*' signifies 'prolonged attention to certain objects of meditation' or 'sustaining a certain state in the mind.' In this sense, the term is often employed for attainments (*samāpatti*) such as 'absorption' (*jhāna*) and 'fruition' (*phala*).¹⁸ In the context of '*Brahmavihāra*,' the term '*vihāra*' aligns more with the second meaning. The rendering 'dwelling' is adopted in this paper to reflect this meaning.

III. SUBLIME STATES OF MIND

There are four states of mind that are collectively called *brahmavihāra*. They are '*mettā*' (loving-kindness), '*karuṇā*' (compassion), '*muditā*' (unselfish delight), and '*upekkhā*' (neutrality). In many instances in the texts, only one or more of the four is used to represent all the four. Comparatively, the texts explain loving-kindness more than the other three.¹⁹ The four states are also called 'illimitable states' (*appamaññā*) because they have to be radiated towards all beings without making any discrimination or boundary.²⁰ The rendering 'immeasurable state' is also used instead of 'illimitable state'.²¹ Pali texts tell that they are to be radiated 'without boundary' (*appamāṇa*).²² The usage of '*appamaññā*' for the four states is based on this.

From the *Abhidhamma* perspective, 'loving-kindness' represents a mode of 'non-hatred' (*adosa*), while 'neutrality' is a mode of 'mental equipoise' (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*). These two are mental states (*cetasika*) that can manifest in various forms and are present in all wholesome consciousnesses. However, they do not always appear as 'loving-kindness' and 'neutrality', respectively. By contrast, the other two states – 'compassion' and 'unselfish delight' – correspond to distinct mental states.²³

The term *mettā* is commonly translated as 'loving-kindness'.²⁴ Other renderings are 'friendliness'²⁵ and 'amity'.²⁶ Commentaries explain its literal meaning in two ways. First, *mettā* fosters a 'bond'. Second, it reflects the attitude that a friend holds.²⁷ Based on these interpretations, 'loving-kindness' aligns

¹⁷ *Udāna Pāli*, p. 59.

¹⁸ Buddhaghosa Thera, *Majjhimanikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Paṇācasūdanī)*, vol.5, p. 106.

¹⁹ For example, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, *Dīghanikāya*, vol.2, p.80; *Saigīti Sutta*, *Dīghanikāya*, vol.3, p. 245.

²⁰ *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 336; *Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma and Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma*, p. 331.

²¹ *Sakya*; or *Buddhist Origins*, p. 216.

²² For example, *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 1, p. 234.

²³ *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, pp.89-90.

²⁴ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Discrimination (Paṭisambhidāmagga)* (London: Pali Text Society, 1982), p. 317; *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, p. 336.

²⁵ *Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma and Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma*, p. 331.

²⁶ *Sakya*; or *Buddhist Origins*, p. 216.

²⁷ Buddhaghosa Thera, *Dhammasaṅgani Aṭṭhakathā (Aṭṭhasālinī)*, p.192: *Mijjatitī mettā, sīniyhatitī attho. Mitte bhavā, mittassa vā eṣā pavattitipi mettā*; Dhammapāla Thera, *Itivuttaka*

with the first meaning, and ‘friendliness’ or ‘amity’ fits the second. Here, ‘bond’ has a specific meaning, distinct from everyday usage. Venerable Buddhaghosa explains it as ‘wishing welfare’ (*hita-ajjhāsayatā*).²⁸ Furthermore, a ‘friend’ (*mitta*) shares this ‘bond.’ The qualities of a good friend are mentioned in the texts in many places. For example, a friend protects from falling into misfortune.²⁹ Thus, loving-kindness denotes the attitude one friend extends toward another.

The second sublime state is called *karuṇā*, which is translated mostly as ‘compassion.’ Early translations render it as ‘pity.’³⁰ However, *karuṇā* and pity differ subtly. *Karuṇā* is essentially the capacity to be moved by others’ suffering. It is also associated with the desire to alleviate suffering. On the other hand, ‘pity’ denotes sorrow or sadness for others’ suffering or misfortune of others.³¹ It is not necessarily associated with the desire to alleviate suffering. Thus, the term ‘compassion’ is more fitting in the context of Sublime Dwelling.

Commentaries explain *karuṇā* literally in three ways. First, it is the mental state that stirs the heart upon witnessing others’ suffering. Second, it drives a person to alleviate that suffering. Third, it radiates towards suffering beings.³² The characteristics of *karuṇā* are often explained about *mettā*. While *mettā* wishes to bring welfare and happiness to others, *karuṇā* wishes to remove non-welfare and suffering.³³

The third sublime state, *muditā*, is often rendered as ‘sympathetic joy’³⁴ or ‘appreciative joy.’³⁵ Both expressions refer to the capacity to rejoice in others’ happiness, success, or good fortune. The translation ‘gladness,’ which is the general meaning of ‘*muditā*,’ is used in some translations such as *Path of Purification*.³⁶ In the context of *brahmavihāra*, it denotes the gladness that arises from rejoicing in others’ welfare and happiness. This attitude is notably

Aṭṭhakathā (Paramatthadīpanī II), p. 72.

²⁸ *Khuddakapāṭha Pāli*, p. 248.

²⁹ *Khuddakapāṭha Pāli*, p. 248.

³⁰ Anuruddha Thera, *Compendium of Philosophy*, ed. Mrs. Rhys Davids, trans. Shwe Zan Aung (London: Pali Text Society, 1910), p. 204; *Dhammasaṅgaṇī Aṭṭhakathā*, p.192; Pe Maung Tin, *The Expositor (Aṭṭhasālinī)*, ed. Mrs. Rhys Davids, vol. 2 (London: The Pali Text Society, 1976), p. 258.

³¹ “Pity | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.Com,” accessed February 26, 2025, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/pity_1?q=pity.

³² *Dhammasaṅgaṇī Aṭṭhakathā*, p. 192; *The Expositor (Aṭṭhasālinī)*, p. 258.

³³ *Suttanipāta Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 128.

³⁴ Sarah Shaw, *Buddhist Meditation: An Anthology of Texts From the Pāli Canon*, PDF (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.163; *Summary of the Topics of Abhidhamma and Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma*, p.331.

³⁵ Arahant Upatissa, *The Path of Freedom (Vimuttimagga)*, trans. N. R. M. Ehara, Thera Soma, and Thera Kheminda (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p. 192.

³⁶ *Path of Purification*, p. 311.

different from 'sympathy'.³⁷ 'Sympathy' does not fit the meaning of '*muditā*' because sympathy is a response to another person's pain, sorrow, or distress.³⁸ On the other hand, *muditā* celebrates others' well-being. Instead of being jealous or arousing aversion, *muditā* enables one to share in others' happiness.³⁹ Moreover, unselfish delight rejoices without seeking to deprive others of their well-being and success.⁴⁰ Based upon this meaning given in commentary, it is rendered here as 'unselfish delight.' As the term 'joy' is often used for '*pīti*',⁴¹ it is more appropriate to use 'gladness' or 'delight.'

The term *upekkhā* that is used for the fourth Sublime Dwelling encompasses many dimensions. Fundamentally, it is a neutral stance one adopts towards a person who is neither liked nor disliked.⁴² Commentaries typically describe it as perceiving beings with equipoise, without engaging oneself in thoughts of loving-kindness or compassion.⁴³ Such an explanation is given in conjunction with the doctrine of *kamma*, that beings are the owner of their *kamma*. *Upekkhā* also helps us see equality in beings and avoid partiality or prejudice.⁴⁴ This attitude is emphasized in the *Vimuttimaggā* by saying that when parents have equanimity, they are "neither too attentive nor yet inattentive towards any of their children but regard them equally and maintain an even mind towards them."⁴⁵

The four sublime states are closely interconnected. Each of the sublime states is capable of influencing the others. For example, loving-kindness can influence compassion and vice versa. If loving-kindness is prominent, compassion follows it. Similarly, if compassion is prominent, loving-kindness follows it. The mental state of 'non-greed' (*alobha*), which counters 'greed' (*lobha*), also shares such a relationship with Sublime Dwelling.⁴⁶ Thus, when one of the sublime qualities is developed, the others are also strengthened. This also frees the mind of greed.

Their relationship is illustrated through their presence among parents towards their child. When the child is in the womb, parents exhibit loving-kindness, hoping, "When will we see the child, healthy and able-bodied?"

³⁷ Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation: In Theory and Practice*, Second (Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1975), p. 272.

³⁸ "Sympathy | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.Com," accessed February 26, 2025, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/sympathy?q=sympathy>.

³⁹ *Path of Purification*, p. 312.

⁴⁰ *Suttanipāta Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 128.

⁴¹ H. Gunaratana, "A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation" (Washington, The American University, 1980), p. 129.

⁴² *Vibhaṅga Pāli*, p. 88: *Ekam puggalaṃ neva manāpaṃ na amanāpaṃ disvā upekkhako assa, evameva sabbe satte upekkhāya pharati.*

⁴³ *Path of Purification*, p. 344; *Visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā*, vol.1, p. 384.

⁴⁴ *Path of Purification*, p. 344; *Visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā*, vol.1, p. 384.

⁴⁵ *The Path of Freedom*, p. 193.

⁴⁶ *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 2, p. 93.

When the child is crying and distressed, they feel compassion upon hearing the child's cry. Parents experience unselfish delight when they see the child walk and play freely. When the child marries and sustains his or her own life, the parents maintain neutrality.⁴⁷ The example given in the *Vimuttimaggā* is similar except for the neutrality, as noted earlier.⁴⁸ The Buddha himself also illustrated the nature of loving-kindness by comparing it with the attitude of a mother towards her only child.⁴⁹

Among the four sublime states, loving-kindness plays a foundational role. Compassion and others arise depending upon loving-kindness. For example, when one has loving-kindness, one is moved by others' suffering. Compassion, unselfish delight, and neutrality arise easily in a person who has developed loving-kindness.⁵⁰ Perhaps for this reason, Pali texts often present the teachings of Sublime Dwelling using only it. For example, *Mettā Sutta*,⁵¹ *Mettāsahagata Sutta*,⁵² *Mettābhāvanā Sutta*,⁵³ and so on. In some cases, only the benefits of loving-kindness are shown. For instance, loving-kindness is singled out as a state that leads to growth (*aparihāniyā*).⁵⁴ However, in such cases, it should be understood that other sublime states also accrue such benefits. In this paper, therefore, discourses mentioning only loving-kindness are considered as instances of Sublime Dwelling.

IV. LIBERATION OF MIND (*CETOVIMUTTI*)

The expression 'liberation of mind' (*cetovimutti*) appears commonly in Pali texts in two contexts. First, it denotes 'liberation of mind' through complete freedom from defilements. It is synonymous with the attainment of *Nibbāna*. In this sense, it is frequently termed 'unshakeable liberation of mind' (*akuppā cetovimutti*).⁵⁵ Commentaries identify it as the Fruition of Arhantship (*arahatta-phala*).⁵⁶ Second, it is used to describe the effect of the Sublime Dwelling. This can be seen in phrases like 'liberation of mind by loving-kindness' (*mettā cetovimutti*)⁵⁷ and similar expressions for each sublime state. In such contexts, the phrase 'immeasurable liberation of mind' (*appamāṇā cetovimutti*)⁵⁸ is also used. As explained earlier, this expression is used because the four Sublime Dwellings have to be radiated boundlessly.

⁴⁷ *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 2, p. 157.

⁴⁸ *Path of Freedom*, pp. 181, 191 - 193.

⁴⁹ *Khuddakapāṭha Pāli*, p. 8.

⁵⁰ *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 91.

⁵¹ *Samyuttanikāya*, vol. 5, p. 131; *Anguttaranikāya*, vol. 4, p. 150; *Anguttaranikāya*, vol. 5, p. 342; *Khuddakapāṭha Pāli*, p. 7.

⁵² *Samyuttanikāya*, vol. 5, p. 115.

⁵³ *Itivuttaka Pāli*, p. 19.

⁵⁴ *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 2, pp. 80 - 81.

⁵⁵ *Dasuttara Sutta*, *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 3, p. 273.

⁵⁶ Buddhaghosa Thera, *Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*), vol. 3, p. 1057.

⁵⁷ *Saṅgīti Sutta*, *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 3, p. 248.

⁵⁸ *Mahāvedalla Sutta*, *Majjhimanikāya*, vol. 1, p. 297.

The commentaries outline five forms of liberation: 'liberation through suppression' (*vikkhambhanavimutti*), 'liberation by opposing factor' (*tadaṅgavimutti*), 'liberation through eradication' (*samucchedavimutti*), 'liberation through tranquilization' (*paṭippassaddhivimutti*), and 'liberation through escape' (*nissaraṇavimutti*).⁵⁹ Among these, the liberation attained through Sublime Dwelling is mainly the 'liberation through suppression' as absorption-level concentration can be achieved by cultivating four sublime states. Commentaries explain the five types of 'liberation' also as five kinds of 'abandonment' (*pahāna*).⁶⁰ Essentially, it highlights different forms of abandoning mental afflictions.

The first type of liberation denotes a temporary form of liberation achieved by suppressing mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) by the power of deep concentration (*samādhi*), such as the meditative absorptions (*jhāna*). In this type of liberation, hindrances are temporarily subdued. The neighborhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), which is in proximity to absorptions, also suppresses hindrances.⁶¹ Texts like *Visuddhimagga* state that one can attain all fine-material absorptions through Sublime Dwelling.⁶² Thus, the 'liberation through suppression' can be achieved through this practice.

According to commentaries, in texts that use only the term *mettā*, both the neighborhood and absorption are implied. However, when it is paired with 'liberation of mind,' it refers only to the loving-kindness that has reached absorption.⁶³ Sublime Dwelling may be aroused just as a wholesome state of mind or as a 'meritorious' act of mind.⁶⁴ Texts say that the development of *mettā* is a much higher form of merit among those that are in the mundane level.⁶⁵ When it is developed systematically as a meditation practice, it can lead to neighborhood concentration and absorption.

The second type of liberation refers to liberation from hindrances and unwholesome states by developing their opposing wholesome factors. One achieves this liberation by counteracting specific defilements. In the commentaries, it is mainly explained about abandoning doubt, wrong views, and ignorance. This is mainly achieved through insight (*vipassanā*) or by applying opposing wholesome mental factors.⁶⁶ As the sublime states oppose

⁵⁹ *Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 2, p. 426.

⁶⁰ *Dhammasaṅgaṇī Aṭṭhakathā (Aṭṭhasālinī)*, p. 351.

⁶¹ *Path of Purification*, p. 131.

⁶² *Path of Purification*, p. 113.

⁶³ Buddhaghosa Thera, *Samyuttanikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sāratthapakāsinī)*, vol.3, p. 105; Buddhaghosa Thera, *Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā (Sammohavinodanī)*, vol. 1, p. 75.

⁶⁴ *Brahmavihāra Dhamma*, pp.11 - 12.

⁶⁵ *Okkhā Sutta*, *Samyuttanikāya*, vol. 2, p. 264; *Velāma Sutta*, *Aṅguttaranikāya*, vol. 4, pp. 392 - 395.

⁶⁶ *Dhammasaṅgaṇī Aṭṭhakathā*, p. 352; *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 39; Mahānāma Thera, *Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā (Saddhammapakāsinī)*, vol. 1, p. 122.

negative mental qualities like hatred and aversion,⁶⁷ Sublime Dwelling is also related to liberation by the opposing factor.

The third type of liberation is a permanent liberation achieved by eradicating defilements through the noble Path (*magga*).⁶⁸ Unlike the previous two types of liberation, this liberation ensures that the hindrances and unwholesome states that have been abandoned never arise again. At the highest level, this is the liberation of an Arahant, one who has eliminated all defilements and escaped the cycle of rebirth (*samsāra*). Sublime Dwelling cannot achieve this liberation directly. However, it supports 'liberation through eradication' in two ways. First, the concentration attained through Sublime Dwelling provides a foundation for practicing insight. Second, its cultivation aids insight by keeping ill will and similar negative states at bay. Liberation through eradication can be attained through the practice of insight, but Sublime Dwelling is a serenity meditation.

The remaining two types of liberation are related to 'liberation through eradication.' Liberation through tranquilization is the result of attaining the Path. It refers to the calming or pacification of the defilements at the stage of Fruition (*phala*). In the process of enlightenment, it comes immediately after the Path. The final type of liberation refers to 'escaping' from the defilements and the cycle of rebirth through the realization of *Nibbāna*. This represents the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path, where one transcends all forms of suffering and attains complete freedom from rebirth.⁶⁹

The 'liberation' associated with Sublime Dwelling is primarily liberation from ill will (*byāpāda*).⁷⁰ The practice of Sublime Dwelling suppresses mental states rooted in hatred and does not allow them to appear in the mind. To emphasize this effect of Sublime Dwelling, the *Saṅgīti Sutta* states that ill will cannot seize the mind of one who has developed Sublime Dwelling.⁷¹ This practice not only prevents the arising of ill will but also abandons it if present.⁷² Furthermore, as absorption can be attained through Sublime Dwelling, it can also suppress other hindrances.

V. BRAHMAVIHĀRA AND INNER PEACE

The four sublime states represented by Sublime Dwelling help in fostering inner peace in two ways. As noted earlier, they first help eliminate negative states of mind such as ill will. A common context in which Pali texts teach Sublime Dwelling is the abandonment of such states. For example, in the *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*, the Buddha instructs that loving-kindness should be developed to abandon ill will, compassion should be developed to eliminate

⁶⁷ *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta*, *Majjhimanikāya*, vol. 1, p. 424.

⁶⁸ *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 39; *Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 123; *Visud-dhimagga*, vol. 2, p. 337.

⁶⁹ *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 39.

⁷⁰ *Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 75.

⁷¹ *Saṅgīti Sutta*, *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 3, pp. 248 - 249.

⁷² *Nivāṇappahānavagga*, *Aṅguttaranikāya*, vol. 1, p. 4.

thoughts of violence, unselfish delight should be developed to abandon displeasure, and neutrality should be developed to eliminate aversion.⁷³ The sublime states directly counteract the four unwholesome states. In the *Saṅgīti Sutta*, neutrality is shown as a way to abandon craving.⁷⁴ Thus, Sublime Dwelling directly opposes two of the five hindrances as counteracting states.

Secondly, hindrances and other unwholesome states are abandoned when one attains absorption concentration.⁷⁵ As noted earlier, this, too, can be achieved through Sublime Dwelling. In serenity meditation, the elimination of hindrances signifies 'serenity' (*samatha*),⁷⁶ a calm effectuated by deeper concentration.⁷⁷ It can also be interpreted as 'peace.' Technically, it is termed 'serenity of mind' (*cittasamatha*).⁷⁸ In everyday terms, it can be called 'peaceful mind'.

The inner peace achieved by Sublime Dwelling is also evident in the benefits of cultivating it. The *Mettā Sutta*⁷⁹ outlines eleven benefits of developing loving-kindness, including sleeping well, awakening calmly, attaining concentration easily, and serene appearance, among others. In such instances, the term '*sukha*,' which is typically translated as 'happiness,' is better rendered as 'peace' or 'ease.' This reflects a mind unburdened by defilement. Indeed, only a mind freed from ill will through the radiation of boundless Sublime Dwelling can induce such a tranquil state.

VI. EXTENDING PEACE AND HARMONY THROUGH BRAHMAVIHĀRA

The inner peace cultivated by Sublime Dwelling naturally extends to promote external peace and happiness. This role is emphasized across numerous Pali discourses. For example, in the *Kosambiya Sutta*, the Buddha includes loving-kindness among states that foster cohesion, cordiality, love, and respect, and leads to harmony, concord, and unity.⁸⁰ Similarly, the *Mettā Sutta* highlights how Sublime Dwelling fosters mutual goodwill. It first generates internal peace by cultivating goodwill toward all beings. As a result of radiating sublime states, others also generate goodwill towards oneself in return.

The *Cūḷavosiṅga Sutta*⁸¹ further illustrates how the practice of loving-

⁷³ Majjhimanikāya, vol.1, p.424; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), pp. 530 - 531.

⁷⁴ *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 3, p. 249.

⁷⁵ *Dīghanikāya*, vol. 3, p. 94.

⁷⁶ *Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 315.

⁷⁷ *Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 3, p. 983.

⁷⁸ *Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 2, p. 522.

⁷⁹ *Mettā Sutta*, *Anguttaranikāya*, vol. 4, p. 150.

⁸⁰ *Majjhimanikāya*, vol 1, p. 322: *Piyakaraṇā garukaraṇā saṅgahāya avivādāya sāmaggīyā ekibhāvāya samvattanti*; *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 420.

⁸¹ *Majjhimanikāya*, vol. 1, p. 206: *Samaggā sammodamānā avivadamānā khīrodakibhūtā aññamaññaṃ piyacakkhūhi sampassantā viharatha*; *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, pp. 301 - 302.

kindness helps a community live peacefully. In this *Sutta*, the Buddha asks a group of three monks if they were living in concord, without disputing. The monks affirm that they do. They attribute it to three strategies: bodily restraint, the complete practice of loving-kindness, and mutual deference. These three factors enable them to dwell together harmoniously without quarreling. According to this *Sutta*, a key aspect of loving-kindness's role in harmony is its expression through bodily and verbal conduct, not merely as a mental state. The *Sutta* also emphasizes practicing loving-kindness consistently, "both in front and behind," meaning without duplicity.

Preventing anger within oneself and avoiding provoking others a critical steps in fostering peace. In this regard, tolerance (*khanti*) or forbearance (*Timika*) plays a significant role. The Buddha emphasizes this quality of mind on various occasions about harmonious co-existence among beings. For example, he states that "tolerance and forbearance are highest religious practices."⁸² Without developing tolerance, one cannot obtain external peace and harmony. To emphasize this point, the Buddha asserts in the *Sedaka Sutta* that "one protects others by developing tolerance."⁸³ Here, 'protection' is used to refer to fostering a harmonious relationship. In the lack of tolerance, one is easily irritated and allows anger to arise in the mind. Consequently, one's mind is not peaceful. Commentaries explain that it is a manifestation of 'non-hatred' (*adosa*).⁸⁴ As noted earlier, loving-kindness is also a manifestation of non-hatred. Thus, in the ultimate sense, 'tolerance' is related to Sublime Dwelling.

In the Pali texts, Sublime Dwelling primarily denotes sublime mental states. For example, expressions such as '*mettācitta*' (mind with loving-kindness) and '*mettā cetovimutti*' (liberation of mind through loving-kindness) a commonly used. As noted earlier, Pali texts frequently present it also as encompassing physical and verbal dimensions. This is said about actions that are done in association with Sublime Dwelling. For example, verbal loving-kindness refers to speaking kindly and gently. Similarly, bodily compassion refers to abstaining from actions that hurt others physically. The practice of Sublime Dwelling through speech and bodily action is particularly important in the practice of morality. The precepts included in the morality training mainly involve abstaining from harming others. For this reason, Venerable Buddhaghosa explains that *brahma* means excellent because *brahmavihāra* represents excellent attitudes held towards beings.⁸⁵ When actions are done based on such attitudes, they do not hurt others. This consequently leads to peaceful co-existence with other beings.

⁸² *Dhammapada*, verse 184.

⁸³ *Sedaka Sutta, Saṃyuttanikāya*, vol. 5, p. 169; Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, vol. 2 (USA: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 1648.

⁸⁴ *Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā*, vol. 1, p. 111; *Visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā*, vol.1, p.350. Mahāsi Sayadaw, pp. 8 - 9.

⁸⁵ *Path of Purification*, p. 314.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper presented 'peace' as a state achieved through the absence of mental defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion. It attempted to present how the Sublime Dwelling plays an important role in attaining this peace by mainly eliminating hatred. As the primary sources of conflict and discord are states rooted in hatred, it is essential to abandon them for peace. Buddhism teaches various approaches to abandon hatred. However, the most recurring method in the Pali texts is Sublime Dwelling. Each of the sublime states works like an antidote to specific unwholesome tendencies. Hatred is abandoned by loving-kindness, violence is abandoned by compassion, jealousy is abandoned by unselfish delight, and aversion is abandoned by neutrality. Sublime Dwelling opposes these states by preventing their emergence and abandoning them if present.

As a serenity meditation, Sublime Dwelling helps to foster inner peace by developing deeper levels of concentration and by countering hindrances of mind. By developing the sublime states systematically, one can attain the stage of neighborhood concentration and complete absorption. The attainment of absorption marks suppression of hindrances, arising of joy, and tranquility. Such a state of absorption is inherently peaceful and is described as 'serenity of mind. Although this type of liberation is temporary, it indeed aids in the permanent removal of defilements.

Another context in which Sublime Dwelling is presented in the text is for fostering harmony and goodwill. It has two aspects. First, Sublime Dwelling helps a person to be benevolent and engage in kind verbal and bodily action. As verbal and bodily actions are generated by the mind, acting with Sublime dwelling makes the actions benevolent. For example, if one speaks or does something with Sublime Dwelling in the mind, one creates a harmonious atmosphere.

Second, discourses like the *Kosambiya Sutta* and *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta* highlight the need to practice Sublime Dwelling in bodily and verbal conduct. As a result of such complete practice of Sublime Dwelling, one lives in concord and unity, dissolving conflict and fostering goodwill in society. Here, tolerance, a protective quality closely related to Sublime Dwelling, plays a vital role. The four sublime states, paired with the practice of tolerance, lead to peace within and contribute to external peace in society and beyond.

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- Pāli - English Glossary
- Accanta-santi*: Ultimate peace; refers to the complete tranquility of *Nibbāna*.
- Adosa*: Non-hatred; a wholesome mental factor linked to *mettā* and tolerance.
- Akuppā cetovimutti*: Unshakable liberation of mind; the permanent freedom of an Arahant.
- Alobha*: Non-greed; a wholesome mental state that counters greed (*lobha*).
- Appamāṇa*: Without boundary; boundless, describing the limitless radiation of sublime states.
- Appamaññā*: Immeasurable states; another term for the four sublime states due to their boundless nature.
- Arahatta-phala*: Fruition of Arahantship; the result of the Arahant’s path, ultimate liberation.
- Avihimsā-vitakka*: Thought of non-cruelty; a component of Right Thought linked to *brahmavihāra*.
- Avyāpāda-vitakka*: Thought of non-ill will; a component of Right Thought linked to *brahmavihāra*.
- Brahma*: Excellent, best; etymological root of *brahmavihāra*, also related to *Brahmā* divinity.
- Brahmacariyā*: Sublime practice; encompassing mental, verbal, and physical ethical conduct.
- Brahmavihāra*: Sublime Dwelling; the four sublime states (*mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā*).
- Byāpāda*: Ill will; a hindrance and negative state countered by *mettā*.

- Cetasika*: Mental factor; a constituent of consciousness, e.g., *adosa*, *alobha*.
- Cetovimutti*: Liberation of mind; freedom from defilements, temporary or permanent.
- Cittasamatha*: Serenity of mind; mental calm from concentration, equated with peace.
- Dosa*: Hatred; a root defilement opposed by *brahmavihāra*.
- Jhāna*: Meditative absorption; deep concentration states.
- Kamma*: Action; deeds owned by beings.
- Karuṇā*: Compassion; second sublime state, counters violent thought and action.
- Khanti*: Tolerance, forbearance; linked to *adosa* and *mettā* for external peace.
- Lobha*: Greed; a root defilement countered by *alobha*.
- Magga*: Path; the Noble Path leading to the eradication of defilements.
- Mettā*: Loving-kindness; first sublime state, counters ill will.
- Mitta*: Friend; basis of *mettā*'s attitude of goodwill.
- Muditā*: Unselfish delight; third sublime state, counters jealousy and displeasure.
- Nibbāna*: Nibbana; ultimate liberation and peace, freedom from defilements.
- Nibbuti*: Peace; synonymous with cessation of unwholesome states.
- Nissaraṇavimutti*: Liberation through escape; freedom from *saṃsāra* via *Nibbāna*.
- Nīvaraṇa*: Hindrances; five mental obstacles.
- Pahāna*: Abandonment; five types paralleling liberation.
- Paññā*: Wisdom; one of three training.
- Paṭipassaddhivimutti*: Liberation through tranquilization; calming defilements at Fruition.
- Phala*: Fruition; arises after Path in the process of enlightenment.
- Pīti*: Joy; contrasted with *muditā*'s gladness.
- Samādhi*: Concentration; mental focus, including proximate and absorption levels.
- Samatha*: Serenity; calm from concentration, equated with peace.
- Sammā-saṅkappa*: Right Thought; includes non-ill will and non-cruelty.
- Samāsa*: Cycle of rebirth; transcended in liberation through escape.
- Samucchedavimutti*: Liberation through eradication; permanent freedom via the Path.
- Sikkhā*: Training; three types (*sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*) encompassing the Path.
- Sīla*: Morality; one of the three training.
- Sukha*: Happiness, ease; interpreted as peace in *brahmavihāra* contexts.
- Tadaṅgavimutti*: Liberation by opposing factor; counters defilements with wholesome states.
- Taṇhā*: Craving; a root defilement, linked to neutrality's opposition.
- Tatramajjhataṭṭa*: Mental equipoise; *Abhidhamma* term for *upekkhā*'s neutrality.
- Upacāra-samādhi*: Proximate concentration; stage nearing absorption.

Upekkhā: Neutrality; fourth sublime state, counters aversion.

Vihāra: Dwelling; meditative state or abode.

Vikkhambhanavimutti: Liberation through suppression; temporary freedom via concentration.

Vimutti: Liberation; freedom from defilements.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND MINDFULNESS; INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE IN BUDDHISM

Prof. Vijay Kumar Singh*

Abstract:

Peace is not limited to a word or concept but is an achievable goal in Buddhism en route to *Nibbāna*. Peace can be categorised into two as inner and outer, but the outer peace is only an outcome of inner peace, and hence, the Buddhist practices like *Brahma Vihāra*, *Vipassanā*, and others lead to peace that is *Nibbāna*. The social aspect of peace is linked with its outer category of peace, although it occupies prominent space in political and social practices, but in reality, history proved that the inner peace and the ways told by the Buddha to achieve it is trustworthy and worth to give a chance in life. The present paper will try to attempt to throw light in the above area from the perspective of nitty nitty-gritty of modern life not only full of technicality those of not earlier, but it will also ponder upon the ways to understand its applications today.

Keywords: *Buddha, applied Buddhism, engaged Buddhism, nibbāna, dukkha.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As a verb, Peace is the state of being calm or quiet. According to Sanskrit dictionaries^{1, 2} the words *samnipata*, *samgri*, and *samgama* all refer to the concept of peace. And we need peace as a verb as we are gathered here to find ways to achieve it. Peace at the individual level ensures peace at the world level, and this can be understood in various ways as the following: Before anything, we have to think upon some points while considering the ways to find out establishment of peace at world level.

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¹ Hirakawa, Akira, ed. 1997. *Bukkyo Kanbon Daijiten* (Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary). Tokyo: The Reiyukai, p. 54.

² Ogiwara Unrai [A.k.a., Wogihara Unrai], ed. 1979. *Bon-Wa dai jiten* [originally subtitled: The Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary of Buddhist Technical Terms based on the Mahavyutpatti]. Revised ed. Tokyo: Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan.

1.1. Peace is not unconditional. It is linked with various factors; some of them are individual, some are societal, and some are universal. It depends on what we are searching for.

1.2. Peace is linked with

- i. Happiness
- ii. Security
- iii. Basic Amenities
- iv. Education
- v. Understanding: Peace is not only a noble vision for humanity; it is a call to action³.

The above points are applied to everyone and everywhere, irrespective of person, religion, race, or location. Just one thing to be considered, and that is we are talking about human society on Earth (presumably).

Every being wants happiness. Even a tiny insect or any negligible creature also want to save its life from any kind of harm to save its life. In this manner, peace, in a way, is linked to life. As happiness gives us the feeling we want to repeat, we try to have happiness. And yes, peace is instrumental to happiness. In the absence of security where there is a danger of life and property, there can't be peace as nobody wants an insecure and unstable environment.

Here, I want to draw your attention that these above points are not created by me but are recommended by individuals and institutions working in peace building measures. Then what is the pointing out in it? It is the numerous points goes up to endless those are told necessity or rather sometimes mandatory to build peace in society and it is deliberated thinking of modern times that when this institutionalized peace has been achieved then the individual peace will be automatically become easy to gain, sometimes it will come as a bi product of the societal peace. I here disagree with this. This is an impasse, or I may allow to say conspiracy. I have some arguments for this: 1. There is no way to achieve societal peace if a person is not at ease within or is not experiencing peace from his inner thought. Peace is to be realized and then felt and not a single-shot sure method to gain, it is not a result, it is a state of mind. Secondly, a bewildered person, whatever position he may be, cannot find a way to societal peace as he or she does not have enough experience to find a way for others as he or she does not possess it at his/her level. It cannot come as a byproduct of societal peace.

But here I was talking about the point suggested by scholars to achieve peace, and I too have listed down these points, feeling these are necessary for peace building. So, what goes in favour of my points and against others as they are the same? It is When we apply this at the societal level, it means social friendship and harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. There

³ Actions for a peaceful world, <https://www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions-peaceful-world>, Accessed on 26th January, 2025.

is a website that attracts by its definition of peace closest to the Buddhist concept of peace. It says, "Peace is a human disposition, i.e., personal and social orientation to secure freedom from distress to foster a capacity to act, predicted on a fundamental recognition of freedom and dignity of all people⁴."

Peace is not a simple word but more of a concept and philosophy to live and let live. Since time immemorial, humans persistently tried to achieve peace as one finds happiness and solace in peace only. And it is the man only that disrupts the efforts of peacekeeping. To me, peace is a paradox, and even man will rely on believing in the concept that someday, peace will prevail in society. That will never come, and it will remain a utopia. It is not really too impossible to find the newer and easier way to achieve peace and at the same time it is also possible to find, older and tougher ways for the same but it demands consistent effort and the way is the goal here. There is a school of thought in Tibetan Buddhism named Lāmḍe that believes that the way is the fruit or the goal that was to be achieved. Needless to say that this school of thought resides under Buddhism, and yes, Buddhism advocates the Eightfold Path.

Nevertheless, peace is a product of human rights: the more a society promotes, protects, and fulfils the human rights of its people, the greater its chances for curbing violence and resolving conflicts peacefully.

I am leaving two categories of peace discussion for further study due to the paucity of time and space. The first one is

1. Negative peace and positive peace
2. UN resolution of Peace

The reason for indifference toward the above two points is that the first point is purely in nature and is for academic discussion, although most components of negative and positive peace are covered in other points given elsewhere in this writing. The second point regarding the UN resolution has proved so ineffective that it needs a separate title for discussion. Hence proceeded toward my favourite subject, and it is Buddhism.

Buddhism peace is achieved when the goal is achieved, and the goal is Nirvana. But in Mahayana, Nirvana is postponed till the attainment of this goal to all sentient beings⁵.

How to cultivate peace

The method to achieve peace depends upon how the peace is perceived by the person or practitioner. Peace comes from within when our mind is tranquil and not bewildered. As the mind is the forerunner among all other limbs, it suffers when our mind is polluted by the triple coil of Attachment, greed, and delusion as rightly described in the very first verse of *Dhammapada* as

*Manopubangma dhammamanosettha manomaya,
Manasa ce padutthena bhasati va karoti va.*

⁴ <https://ecdpeace.org> accessed on 17th JANUARY, 2025.

⁵ (Shāntideva, *Bodhicaryavatara*, 10.55)

*Tato na dukkham manveti chakkavam vahato padam.*⁶

Buddhism has long been celebrated as a religion of peace and nonviolence. In the opinion of Johan Galtung⁷, a Norwegian peace studies pioneer, closest to the one dynamic, complex peace theory he proposes, in which the world is “precisely a process based on diversity in symbiotic (mutually influential) interaction.” In this world of multi-leveled plurality, according to Galtung, peace is not a stable, end state but a more interactive process of a series of changing and balancing acts, an ongoing dialectic between our actions and the world.

This is my personal firm opinion that peace comes from within, and it should be called inner peace as it is achieved by an unpolluted mind. However, the way of world peace cannot be achieved, and all the efforts in this direction will be futile in the absence of personal peace.

II. INNER PEACE AND OUTER PEACE

As in Buddhism, we can find tremendous number of teachings regarding the methods of achieving inner peace of mind that bring happiness, named Ananda.

But we must also consider the social aspect of peace that compounds the world order of peace.

2.1. Factors for world peace

2.1.1. Peace is the key to security as it prevents war and enmity. The Buddhist way to prevent war and end enmity is a twofold method. For preventing war, the method is to develop compassion, i.e., compassion towards entire sentient beings. The Buddhist way to end enmity is to develop one of the four *Brahma Vihara*, friendliness.

2.1.2. Action inside and impact outside- The teaching of the Buddha is to develop calm abiding and develop insight. In other way, the practice of *Samatha* and *Vipassana* is the answer to the action of *Vipassana* inside and the effect of establishing world peace outside.

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” - Albert Einstein.

Peace in other words is happiness and is the goal for each and every one in Buddhist to achieve. But this happiness should not be misunderstood by the worldly happiness that is merely sensual pleasure and that too will turn out to be Suffering. As Nagarjuna told in his book *Prajñādaṇḍa*⁸ that the worldly happiness turned into suffering and sometime suffering seemingly turns out to

⁶ Rinpoche, S. (1990). *The Dhammapada: Verses and Stories*. Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies. Verse 1. p. 1.

⁷ Galtung, Johan. 1993. *Buddhism: A Quest for Unity and Peace*. Honolulu: Dae Won Sa Buddhist Temple. Galtung, Johan. 1990. “The Path toward Peace Lies in Dialogue and Action.” *Seikyo Times*, No. 348, 43 - 46.

⁸ *Prajñādaṇḍa* verse 10, *Bhoṭaparakahshaha*, A Tibetan Chrestomathy, Vidushekhara Bhat-tacharya, University of Calcutta, 1939.

be happiness.

To find out the method/s of peace building, we have to understand the forces opposite or hindrance in peace keeping. As in Buddhism the first step to find happiness is to understand what is Suffering, i.e. the first noble Truth. Hence let's find out what are the obstacle or stages of conflict as in the view of the experts. The United Nations has suggested⁹ various points, working upon which the peace may be achieved.

i. Speak up for peace - Standing up for all individual or organisation who are working for peace at any level, from micro to macro level.

ii. Educate yourself about peace: Education is the key to all the success of any working effort. Speaking up for peace effort and strengthening of the peace agencies will be an effective answer for world peace.

iii. Say no to violence: violence in any form and any type whether structural or accidental should be avoided and necessary infrastructure should be supported to keep things in order.

iv. Practice understanding and solidarity: Feeling of brotherhood and practicing equality will be a great help to eradicate the differences based on cast, creed and social status. Everybody should be made feel the belongingness of system for all. This will help to develop a sense of security and diminish friction among individual or group.

v. Report bullying and harassment: these two are based on envy and ego. The practice of Brahma vihara should be made institutional and the result will be less occupational and work frictions and it will also reflect in harmony at home level among the family members.

vi. Protest inequality and diversity: Bringing the value of equality and equanimity with fundamental amnesties is the key to peace. It is important to protest against inequality and unnecessary diversity.

vii. Support peace advocates: Whosoever, individual or agency, NGO or government is working for peace, we must extend our moral and vocal support.

viii. Follow reliable news sources: In the today fast communicable world, we must cross check and re check the news sources those are merely floated to create sensation and TRP.

ix. Post with care in social media: social media should encourage the content of social care in all of its platform.

Among the above point number 2, 3, 4 are individual and need inner Buddhist education and Buddhist practices where point number 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are societal in nature:

We can see that in the term of Diplomacy, peace can be segmented and understand as the followings:

i. Durable peace: Deterrent policy of keeping Army and Arms enough to

⁹ <https://www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions-peaceful-world> , accessed on 26th of January, 2025.

deter the war

ii. Stable peace - Peacetime diplomacy keeping economically viable and negotiable, necessary for all

iii. Unstable peace - Preventative diplomacy just to prevent visible and coming war

iv. Crisis - Crisis management: Several steps are available under Diplomacy including diplomatic alliances and negotiations

v. Violence - Cease-fire negotiations.

Dealing and deliberating with above mentioned points my paper will be pondering upon some pertinent question, and the possible answers from the Buddhist thought are the following: -

Why and how cultivate inner peace: Individual peace is a way instrumental to world peace, and there is no doubt about this. Peace is achieved when the person who is trying to achieve peace is free from any wants and longing and as per Buddhist teaching, the inner calmness or the peace is calming the mind which is in turn prerequisite in Vipassanā. Calming the mind is another term for peace, this is my submission.

Achieving calming the mind¹⁰ or peace at personal level

The root cause of achieving the calmness is the three defilements named Raga, Doṣa, and Moha, Attachment, greed and delusion. Buddhist teachings advocate the removal of these three defilements and only then proceed to Brahma Vihara.

These are the four *Brahma Viharas*,¹¹ and they will be discussed as all these four are both way beneficial at individually as well as societal level. These four *Viharas* should be understood in our behaviour towards society at different levels so that to pave the way to world peace.

Maitri¹² or Friendliness: Friendliness is the practice of treating all people as friends or equal who are socially equal to your status. It means the behaviour with those people who are equal in social and economic level to the practitioner. It means sharing all the empathy and joy with all person while treating them equal as the base feeling of suffering is for all people. It is very easy to treat socially and equal people and like them as friends. The practice of friendliness makes the practitioner able to remove Doṣa or **jealousy** as he feels the same joy for the wealth and power of persons who are equal to him.

Mudita¹³, the empathetic joy: Being happy in the rise of people wealthier,

¹⁰ Calming the mind is well explained in Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta as Samatha in Pali Canonical literature. Part of Sutta Piṭaka, in *Digh Nikāya* 22.

¹¹ AN 10.208: *Brahmavihāra Sutta: The Sublime Attitudes*. Access to Insight. Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. 2004.

¹² AN 4.125, *Metta Sutta*. Access to Insight. Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. 2006. See note 2 on the different kinds of Brahmas mentioned.

¹³ Nyanaponika, Thera; Jackson, Natasha; Knight, C.F.; Oates, L.R. (1983). *Mudita: The*

more powerful to the practitioner is the way to practice for the removal of attachment. When one came in contact with any person/s who are wealthier in economic and upper in social strata then all the belongingness to that person become the object of attachment and person develop the thinking that having those things make him equal to the convenience of that wealthy person and in turn he or she will also become happy. So, the development of Attachment grows bigger and bigger as its root is always in the core of the thinking process of a living being. So, feeling joy while seeing a wealthier and richer person is the way to remove Attachment and also to prevent the development of Doṣa or greed, as there will be no unnecessary competition to have the possession of wealth and power that the practitioner does not possess.

Karuṇā¹⁴; Compassion or loving kindness¹⁵: Feeling joy for the persons who are weaker and lower in status is the practice of this Brahma Vihara. This will ease the eradication or uprooting of, and this way, the practitioner will be able to do something for them for their upliftment.

Upekkhā¹⁶ or Equanimity: Practice treating all people without the consideration or the wealth of power they possess. This point is pivotal to have peace at the inner level and will give rise to working for all beings at all levels without any expectation from them. And at the international level of a country's diplomatic policy, one has to learn to de-hyphenate and rehyphenate its interest with multiple countries having conflicting interests naturally, this is the crux of Upekkhā or equanimity. Worth reiterating that at the individual level, Upekkhā, or equanimity is experiencing and realising the reality of things through the experience of sensation inside the body, commencing with the Ānāpāna meditation, the concentration upon inhale and exhale together with observation of sensation in the triangle area of nostrils. If we take the canonical reference, the *Theragāthā*¹⁷ and *Dhammapada*¹⁸ give us the concept of unshaken like rock in all circumstances, as peace is his attribute.

How inner Peace is linked to World Peace

Methods or ways to achieve World Peace: The Buddhist principles supporting world peace are:

i. Ahimsā: The principle of *Ahimsā*, i.e. non-harming is central to Buddhist ethics. The Buddha discouraged retaliation and encouraged forgiveness as a

Buddha's Teaching on Unselfish Joy (PDF). *The Wheel*. Vol. 170. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.

¹⁴ Warder, A. K. (2004) [1970]. *Indian Buddhism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. ISBN 81-208-1741-9.

¹⁵ Salzberg, Sharon (1995). *Loving-Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Shambhala Publications. p. 119. ISBN 9781570629037.

¹⁶ Piyadassi, Thera (1960). "The Seven Factors of Enlightenment". *Wheel*. 1. Buddhist Publication Society. Retrieved 2013-10-07.

¹⁷ *Theragāthā* 648, *Khuddaka Nikāya*, Sutta Piṭka,

¹⁸ *Dhammapada Verse 81*, Lakundakabhaddiyatthera Vatthu, Wangchuk Dorje Negi, 2013, Central Institute of higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi.

path to peace. The Buddha advises responding to hatred with love, like a gentle breeze that does not hold onto the past.¹⁹ The Buddha taught that harming others only leads to more harm and suffering, as we are well aware with the story of *Kālayakkhinī*, where the enmity prolongs through various rebirths because of the actions led by reactions of harming others. It's only by the intervention of the Buddha that the suffering of both the wives of that merchant gone through the ill will of enmity. At the end, the following verse was said by the Buddha as the following:

*Na hi verena verāni sammantidha kudācanam
Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo sanantano.*²⁰

ii. Compassion and loving kindness: Buddhist advocacy of empathy and goodwill is not limited to human beings but is extended toward all beings. In turn, it fosters global harmony and reduces hatred. In this way, it also cared for ecological balance and the problem of environment degradation too.

iii. Interdependence: Everything in the world is interconnected, so harming others ultimately harms oneself. The story of Cakṣhupālathera is a burning example that how an outstanding physician becomes blind while harming others. The karma rebounds to yourself. This insight promotes cooperation over conflict and becomes an instrument of peace.

iv. Mindfulness and self-discipline: By cultivating awareness and control over thoughts and emotions, individuals can avoid actions that contribute to conflict and discord and pave the way to world peace. The exercise over mindfulness will be explained in modern perspective in the Thich Nhat Hanh section of this article.

v. Right speech and right action: It's only our desire or wants that make us unstable and longing for more possession for everything whether it is material or the power. It is not easy, rather almost impossible to stop wanting because it is the nature of desire and its projection that when we will fulfil it, it may go, but it goes on to another step or thing and we keep on longing. The only available answer is to understand that it cannot be fulfilled, and our desire must learn to give up through the practice of *Vipassana*.

We may argue that *Vipassana* is an individual approach and it would not work at societal level or where the conflict between nations exists. At the same time, if we analyse it, we will find that it is we who nurture personal ambitions and project it on to societal level. Let's understand how *Vipassana* eliminates our longing one by one, minutely and at a subtle level. We will discuss it in detail in this paper.

The mindfulness is the term that is very much associated with almost every concept in Buddhist teachings. There are various kinds of meanings, explanations, and references available regarding mindfulness. The four kinds

¹⁹ Majjhim Nikāya 21, Kakacupamsuttaṃ.

²⁰ *Dhammapada* (Pali & Tibetan Text), Wangchuk Dorje Negi, 2013, Central Institute of higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, Verse Number 5.

of mindfulness²¹ are very much discussed among scholars as they are in need not only for Meditative exercises but also for being in peace.

III. CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATIONS

While Buddhism stresses personal responsibility, it acknowledges structural inequities. Engaged Buddhism or Applied Buddhism adapts techniques to advocate for systemic change, blending tradition with contemporary issues. Modern movements, inspired by figures like His Holiness XIVth Dalai lama, Dr. B R Ambedkar and Thich Nhat Hanh, integrate spiritual practices with social and political Activism. Addressing injustice, poverty, social inequality and climate change is part of path to peace. Below a section is given about some structural suggestion from Thich Nhat Hanh. Now here, the recommendation for the methods to achieve world peace is based on the thoughts of Thich Nhat Hanh in his book named “**Being Peace**”. In this book the answer for all the problem is given as **Mindfulness**. We can understand mindfulness as awareness too but mindfulness is a broader and more conceptual term and awareness is generic one although in my article and here in the reference they are used interchangeably. Some of the mindfulness are the awareness too in all respect but some are not strictly. However, there are fourteen mindfulness training were suggested for being in peace and in turn elevate oneself to the road of world peace. The fourteen mindfulness are:

i. Finger to Moon: The first level is named by Thich Nhat Hanh as “The Roar of Lion”²². It is often said that the Buddha’s teaching is only a raft to help you cross the river, a finger pointing to the moon, hence the first mindfulness is to consider the goal and not the torch that is illuminating the goal. Torch is only a medium to help to achieve target. We cannot, in the name of the finger or the raft, kill each other. Human life is more precious than any ideology or doctrine. Again, the defilement envy or jealousy is the target of this mindfulness. Thich Nhat Hanh specified this mindfulness as follow:

“One of the most basic teachings of the Buddha is that life is precious. Peace can only be achieved when we are free from fanaticism. The more you practice this mindfulness training, the deeper you will go into reality and understanding the teaching of the Buddha.”

ii. Awareness of suffering due to attachment: Aware of the suffering create by attachment to views and wrong perceptions, we are determined to avoid being narrow-minded and bound to present views. A scientist with an open mind, who can question the present knowledge of science, will have more of a chance of discovering a higher truth. Hence, one should not be cling to something as absolute truth will prevent the practitioner to learn further.

iii. Respecting right of others including family members: Stop forcing/ impose others authority, threat, money, propaganda, or indoctrination – to

²¹ U Pandita, Sayadaw (2006). *The State of Mind Called Beautiful*. Simon and Schuster. p. 51. ISBN 9780861713455.

²² Hanh, Thich Nhat (2005), *Being peace*, Berkley, California, Parallax Press.

adopt our views. We will, however, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness through compassionate dialogue. It will pave the way to world peace if organise globally in same fashion as in family level.

iv. Awareness regarding the nature of Suffering: Not to avoid or close our eyes before suffering is the fourth mindfulness. Thich Nhat says that We are committed to finding ways, including personal contact, images, and sounds, to be with those who suffer, so we can understand their situation deeply and help them transform their suffering into compassion, peace, and joy.

v. Mindful in consuming everything: The fifth mindfulness is to Aware that true happiness is rooted in peace, solidity, freedom, and compassion, and not in wealth or fame, we are determined not to take as the aim of our life fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasure, nor to accumulate wealth while millions are hungry and dying. The understanding that our commitment for living simple and also to share our time, energy, and material resources with those in need, these are the root of world peace. It means mindful consuming of all resources including food, beverages, natural resources like air, water and Earth. Not to consume alcohol and drug also comes in this category of practice.

vi. Mindfulness for Anger: Next mindfulness suggested by Thich Nhat Hanh is mindfulness to address Anger. The breathing exercises are the way to stop irritation and open the blocked communication due to anger. The practice of Compassion is required to do this mindfulness.

vii. Mindfulness of Middle: The seventh mindfulness is the heart of all these fourteen mindfulness. Mindfulness of middle here means to live in present with awareness. By touching all the thing around and feel the freshness. No longer regrets about the past and worries about the future, craving in present all the time. So here the practice will be mindful breathing to come back to what is happening in present moment. The above seven mindfulness training suggested by master Thich Nhat Hanh are concerned with mind. Now eighth and ninth mindfulness will be concerned regarding our speech. Then the rest five mindfulness will be mindfulness practice regarding the body.

viii. Mindfulness of listening and loving speech: It is true that one of the great hurdles in the way of peace is lack of communication. One of the major reasons is every person want to speak and express his/her thought. Keeping communication open and possible, always ready to listen and speak only loving and soothing tone, these are the tools of this mindfulness.

ix. The mindfulness of speaking constructively: Everybody here will agree with me that it is our words that are capable of creating heaven or hell. The words we speak can create love, trust, and happiness around us, or create suffocation, agony, and a hell. We should be careful about what we say. If we tend to talk too much, we should become aware of it and learn to speak less. We must become aware of our speech and the results of our speaking. In nutshell, this mindfulness of speech is that “We should speak constructively”. The next five mindfulness is about mindfulness of body.

x. Taking partisan views: This mindfulness of body is not to use the

community for personal gain or profit or transform our community into a political instrument. This does not mean that we must be silent about injustice. It just means we should do it with awareness and not take sides. If we take sides, we will lose our power to help mediate the conflict and in the place of achieving peace we will be end up creating conflicts of interests and then anti-peace situations.

xi. Choosing right vocation: Not to live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. It is true that in field of ecology and environment, there are lot of degradation has been occurred, great violence and injustice have been done and taken place already and the best way is to choose our occupation judiciously and consciously. We will do our best to select a livelihood that helps realize our ideal of understanding and compassion.

xii. Cultivating non-violence: Awareness regarding the damage done by war and conflicts, compassion in our daily lives, promote peace Education, mindful meditation in academic-social curriculum, reconciliations among within families, nations and communities will be turned out to be instrumental in world peace and all these are needing calming of mind at individual level and policy in reducing defence budget allocation at national level. Observing the five Buddhist precepts is the first step to practice mindfulness for non-violence and to create peace at world level, one has to learn to live in peace. Preventing war is much better than protesting against the war. Protesting the war is too late.

xiii. Mindfulness of awareness of illegal and immoral values: The awareness regarding the immoral-illegal activities. Cultivating loving kindness and learning to work for the well-being of people, animals, plants, and minerals. It is the way to be mindful of this kind. Practicing Generosity is the right way to be aware. Here we see that the two of six paramitas are need to be focussed in the development of this thirteenth mindfulness as Thich Nhat Hanh suggests. Sharing our belongings and resources in all possible manner will pave the way to develop forbearance and friendliness and hence the third Paramita will help us.

xiv. Mindfulness to be refrain from sexual misconduct: As we all are aware of the fourth non-meritorious deed in the fundamental teachings of Buddhist precepts, we have to learn to refrain from any kind of sexual misconduct. It is this conduct that is in the base or jealousy, agony, rivalry and all turned out to be ani-peace phenomena both at individual, social and national levels. To start with, we have to learn about not only work upon our own conduct but make it a social movement by adopting work for protecting our children from sexual abuse and inducting sex education in modern curriculums. Keeping chastity for self and help other community member to protect their chastity is a good start for Sangha members while the former method was for the lay devotees. Here Thich Nhat Hanh gives three reasons for the monks and nuns to celibate. Three reasons. The first is that the monks in the time of the

Buddha were urged to practice meditation for most of the day and if a monk had a family, then he would not be able to spend all the day in the work for the Dharma for people around him. The second reason is that sexual energy had

to be preserved for meditation. The third reason Buddhist monks observed celibacy is the question of suffering due to large population and it is not at all in the favour of monk to develop family in the suffering world, hence celibate.

To sum up The Fourteenth Mindfulness Training urges us to respect our own body and to maintain our energy for the realization of the Way. Not only meditation, but any efforts that are required to change the world require energy. We should take good care of ourselves. Hence with the help of practicing Four Brahma viharas or the Supreme Bliss, these six perfections or Pāramitās, observing five precepts and practicing the practical way of non-violence and sex education, the target of peace at individual and world level be achieved because only a person having peace can bring world peace.

Buddhism teaches that true peace begins within. Through mindfulness, compassion, non-violence, and understanding interconnectedness, individual and societies can cultivate lasting peace. By practice Buddhist teaching described above, the aim to have a more harmonious world can be achieved.

Snippets:

“Buddhism is not just a religion of the past or a mere faith as many have thought, but it is a time-tested scientific religion and philosophy which, in the context of the present world-situation, is more relevant today than ever before for establishing world peace.²³”

Buddhist offer a profound framework for achieving world peace by fostering inner transformation, nonviolence and global responsibility. If individuals and societies adopt these teachings and principles, the path towards lasting peace becomes clearer and Nirvāṇa will become an innate reality for mankind. The provenance of Buddhism makes the land of its origin i.e., India great in the eyes of followers but it is its furtherance outside Asia that made it wonder. Its practice in the land of its existence among the exuberance of religious order keeps its worthiness. While Buddhism promotes peace, historical and political factors have sometimes led to conflicts involving Buddhist majority regions. However true Buddhist practice calls for resolving conflicts through understanding rather than aggression. The biggest hurdle in the way to achieve peace is the notion of people taking it as a vicarious liability.

Peace is one of the central themes in Buddhism both an internal and external sense. Buddhism teaches that true peace arises from within, through the cultivation of wisdom, compassion, and mindfulness. By understanding the nature of suffering and following the Noble Eightfold Path, individual can attain inner tranquillity and contribute to more peaceful world. Buddhism sees peace not as the absence of conflict as the presence of wisdom, compassion, and a deep understanding of the nature of life. As a noun peace is defined in Dictionary as a period of situation where there is no war or violence in that region or country. If we are not happy, if we are not peaceful, we can't share peace and happiness with others, even those we love, those who live under the

²³ Morgan, Kenneth W. (ed.) *'The Path of the Buddha'*, 1956, p. 12.

same roof. If we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can smile and blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace.²⁴

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²⁴ Hanh, Thich Nhat, *Being peace*, 2005, p.13, Parallax Press, Berkley, California.

BUDDHIST WISDOM FOR INNER PEACE: A FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

Prof. Dr. Saw Htut Sandar^{*}

Abstract:

The study presented Buddhist wisdom as a foundation for inner peace and global transformation. It emphasizes the importance of mindfulness, compassion, and renunciation to achieve inner peace, which radiates to the community and the world. It discusses the practice of precepts, the Four Noble Truths, and contemplation to resolve conflicts, heal social divisions, and promote sustainable living. It also emphasizes that true peace comes from overcoming greed, hatred, and ignorance, and presents the Noble Eightfold Path as a means to achieve liberation. Finally, it promotes ethical living in the modern age, emphasizing the connection between compassion, mindfulness, and social ethics to build a harmonious and sustainable world.

Keywords: Buddhism, inner peace, global transformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Peace is a timeless aspiration that transcends geographical, cultural, and ideological boundaries. Cultivating inner peace as a foundation for global harmony cannot be overstated in an era marked by conflicts, social unrest, and environmental challenges. Buddhism, with its profound teachings and practices, offers invaluable insights into achieving this equilibrium. Rooted in the principles of mindfulness, compassion, and non-attachment, Buddhist practices provide a transformative pathway for individuals to attain inner tranquility, which, in turn, radiates outward to foster peace in the broader community and the world.

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This conference intends to investigate how Buddhist ideas, such as following the precepts taught by the Buddha for daily practice, maintaining the precepts, cultivating the four sublime stages, *Brahmavihāras* (*Metta*, *Karuna*, *Mudita*, *Upekkha*), the expression analyzed will include *Metta* (loving-kindness), *Karuna* (Compassion), *Mudita* (Goodwill), *Upekkha* (Equanimity). These are the four kinds of *Brahmavihāra*. It has, however, been mentioned in *Mahāgovinda Sutta*¹ as *Brahmacariya*.²

This exchange aims to demonstrate that promoting inner peace is not only an individual pursuit but a significant impetus for creating a more compassionate, peaceful, and resilient society. As we convene to honor the Buddha's wisdom on Vesak Day, this theme acts as both a catalyst for action and a beacon of hope for a future in which inner and outward peace coexist. Buddha said that all difficulties, conflicts, and wars stem from a poor inner mindset. It is exempt from several others.

In Buddhism, happiness is categorized into two types: worldly happiness and spiritual happiness.

1.1. Worldly happiness: This mentions the pleasure obtained by satisfying fundamental necessities and leading a morally upright life. The Buddha taught the importance of ethical behavior, which included refraining from activities that cause damage to others, such as lying, theft, or killing. By adhering to the Five Precepts (*Pañca Sila*), individuals establish a basis for a harmonious and peaceful existence.³

1.2. Spiritual happiness: This represents a superior, enduring type of happiness attained by spiritual development and liberation from the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*). According to Buddhism, true pleasure is found in the attainment of *Nibbana* (Nirvana), which is the end of all desires and attachments. This condition is defined by deep tranquility, liberation, and happiness that surpasses any material or sensory pleasures.

1.3. Do you want peacefulness?

This simple question will always be answered with a big “Yes” from all of us. We want to have happiness and peacefulness, although the idea of what constitutes peace and how it can be obtained differs from person to person. Everyone craves happiness and peacefulness, and they work hard day and night to gain happiness, even if it is known to be fleeting. Yet despite their striving,

¹ *Mahagovinda Sutta*, *Brahmacariya* is explained as the four infinities (*appamanna*), infinite love, etc. DA.i.178; MA.i.275.

² The Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw of Burma. Tran. U Min Swe, *Brahmavihāra Dhamma*, 1985. Pp. 19.

³ The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the *Digha Nikaya*. 1987. Translated from the Pali by Maurice Walsh. 1996. (Kandy, Sri Lanka, BPS Buddhist Publication Society). (ISBN 955-24-0154-2), The Moralities, Sutta 1 Brahmajala Sutta: The Supreme Net, pages 67-90. (Short Section on Morality 1.8 and 1.9 pages 68-69 includes the first Four Precepts of The Five Precepts *Pañca Sila*. Pp. 538.)

they are often further rather than nearer to what they have tried so hard to work for. Why is this so?

Happiness and peacefulness are a state of mind, they cannot be found in the material things around us, like wealth, power, or fame.⁴ Wealth can be a source of physical comfort and the sense of well-being that comes with using it wisely for the benefit of others. The search for pleasure must not be confused with the search for happiness and peacefulness. Pleasure is a passing show and does not offer lasting peacefulness. Worldly pleasure can be brought, but not real happiness. Peace and happiness come from within, based on the foundation of simple goodness and a clear consciousness.

No one is happy unless there is contentment within. If you want to live peacefully and happily, allow others also to live peacefully and happily. Happy indeed we live, friendly amidst the hostile. Amidst hostile men we dwell free from hatred.⁵ That is the law of nature. Unless and until you adjust yourself to live according to these noble principles, you cannot expect happiness and peace in this world. No one can hope to gain happiness and peace by simply praying. Belief in God and praying for protection is useful, however, you should not forget to lock the door when you leave your house. We cannot get anything by praying. You should not neglect your responsibilities, if you act according to moral principles, you can create your heaven in this life on the earth.

1.4. Where is happiness and peacefulness?

Where do we search for happiness? In bars, KTV, restaurants, or using drugs? The answer is “within you.” That is the answer of the Buddha 2500 years ago. Nobody will deny that peacefulness is the most desirable state of being. When we carefully study the meaning of happiness and peacefulness, we find happiness: happiness means life satisfaction, such as quality of life.⁶ *And, on the other hand*, the term ‘peace’ originates from the Anglo-French *pes*, and the Old French *pais*, meaning “peace, reconciliation, silence, agreement”⁷. One can achieve inner peace and tranquility through mental purification.

1.5. The nature of peace

In the Essence of Peace in Buddhist philosophy, it is defined as the overwhelming or realization of suffering (*dukkha*) and inner turmoil. It transcends the mere cessation of external conflict, embodying a state of serenity and equanimity within. The Buddha asserted that genuine peace is attainable solely by transcending the mental impurities of greed (*lobha*), hatred

⁴ *Dhammapada* Chapter 15, Happiness, Verse-201. Dr. Bhaddanta Chekinda. The Dhammapada in Daily Life. 2023. Pp. 418.

⁵ *Dhammapada* Chapter 15, Happiness, Verse-197. Dr. Bhaddanta Chekinda. The Dhammapada in Daily Life. 2023. Pp. 409.

⁶ Michael C. Graham, 2014, *Facts of Life: Ten Issues of Contentment*, published by Outskirts Press. Outskirts Parker, Colorado, USA. Pp. 6 -10).

⁷ “Peace”. *Online Etymology Dictionary* on 14 December 2013.

(*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), which are regarded as the fundamental sources of suffering and mental unrest.

As long as the human race is dominated by greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), ignorance or delusion (*moha*), selfishness (*atta*), injustice, vengeance, and other kindred evil destructive forces, peace and happiness are destroyed in our society. The Buddha showed humankind the way to a new world of peace, prosperity, and goodwill, but today, humans have ignored this timeless message. Happiness and peace never arise when people do not maintain their mindset, calm, and purify.

One of the essential teachings related to peace is the practice of the observance of precepts (*Sīla*),⁸ maintaining the mind with the Four Sublime Stages (*Brahmavihāra Dhamma*), and cultivating empathy and mindfulness (*Sati*)⁹. People should learn to quiet the mind and see reality as it truly is. This clarity and comprehension facilitate a lasting sensation of tranquillity.

The concept of Tranquility and Contentment in Buddhism provides important insights into the essence of serenity and pleasure. According to Buddhist teachings, these notions are perceived as achievable mental states resulting from internal transformation rather than external conditions. Adhering to the principles of the Dhamma enables individuals to cultivate a life of fulfillment and tranquility. His Holiness the Dalai Lama asserts that personal serenity constitutes the foundation for global peace, attainable through compassion. Below are a few of his doctrines on inner tranquility-

II. INNER PEACE LEADS TO PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIPS

His Holiness the *Dalai Lama* has said that inner peace leads to peaceful individuals, families, communities, and ultimately, a peaceful world. His Holiness has said that love and compassion are not luxuries, but necessities for human survival. HH the Dalai Lama has said that conquering oneself is a greater victory than conquering thousands in battle. He has said that being kind and loving to others helps us develop inner peace and happiness and makes others feel loved and cared for. His Holiness has emphasized the value of forgiveness, empathy, and dialogue as tools for resolving conflicts and building bridges between cultures and religions. He also said that peace is achievable by the cultivation of inner peace and the practice of compassion.¹⁰

⁸ *Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta* (MN 77). Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Buddhist Publication Society 1978. Pp 642

⁹ *The Ānāpānasati Sutta* (MN 118), “Mindfulness of Breathing Discourse,” “The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha”, Trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi. 1995. Wisdom Publications. Pp 941.

¹⁰ Dalai Lama’s teachings on inner peace in his book *Dalai Lama’s Little Book of Inner Peace*. You can also watch the Dalai Lama speak on inner peace in a public talk in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009 on YouTube.

2.1. The connection between greed, hatred, ignorance, and inner peace in Buddha's teachings

Buddhism offers a great insight into human suffering and its ending. The foundation of this instruction is the recognition that three mental defilements *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hate), and *moha* (ignorance) cause the most suffering. These defilements prolong the cycle of *samsara* (birth and rebirth) and impede the reach of inner serenity. Captured in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddha's teachings provide pragmatic means to eliminate these defilements and foster enduring tranquillity.¹¹

2.1.1. The role of greed (*Lobha*)

In Buddhist teachings, greed also known as *lobha* is an overwhelming need and desire for either tangible goods, sensory pleasures, or even abstract concepts like power or recognition or we might say desire. The Second Noble Truth emphasizes that the main source of suffering (*Dukkha*) is known as *Taṇhā* or thirst. Greed shows up as clutching and attachment, which causes discontent when wants are unmet. According to the Buddha, *Dana* contentment and generosity counteract greed. Those who let go of attachment open room for inner peace and lessen the irritation brought on by persistent need.

2.1.2. The role of hatred (*Dosa*)

Hatred, or *dosa*, emerges from aversion and malevolence towards persons or circumstances. It is the emotional reaction to unfulfilled aspirations or imagined dangers. Hatred disturbs the mind, leading to anger, resentment, and sometimes violence. The Buddha underscored the need for nurturing loving-kindness (*Mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) to eradicate hate. The *Metta Sutta*¹² guide practitioners to emanate loving-kindness towards all creatures, including those who harm. When hatred is replaced by compassion, the mind attains tranquility and harmony, facilitating the emergence of inner peace.

2.1.3. The role of ignorance (*Moha*)

Ignorance, or *moha*, is the misconception or misunderstanding of reality. It is the inability to see reality accurately, especially the impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) aspects of life.¹³ Ignorance perpetuates both greed and hatred by obstructing awareness of their detrimental effects. The Buddha asserted that knowledge (*Paññā*), developed by correct understanding and attention, eradicates ignorance. *Vipassana* meditation cultivates awareness and insight into the fundamental basis of life, eliminating illusions that hinder inner tranquility.¹⁴

¹¹ *Samyutta Nikāya*, chapter 56, *Sutta* number 11 (SN 56.11). Bhikkhu Bodhi. Volume V, Wheel Publication No. 308/311. 1984. Pp. 420.

¹² Sn 1.8, PTS: *Karaniya Metta Sutta*: Trans- The Amaravati Sangha. The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness. 2004. Pp. 143 – 152.

¹³ Bhikkhu Bodhi. Avijja Pahana Sutta (SN 35.53): Page 1174 *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*. Wisdom Publications. 2000. Pp. 1174.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi. Avijja Sutta (SN 45.1): *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A*

2.2. Path to inner peace

Inner serenity is a natural outcome of overcoming ignorance, hatred, and greed, the three root defilements (*akusala*) that keep beings trapped in the cycle of suffering (*samsara*). The Buddha, through his teachings, provided a systematic approach to purify the mind and attain true peace. This path is known as the Noble Eightfold Path, a structured guide for ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. It consists of three core aspects: moral conduct (*sīla*), mental development (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), all of which contribute to the eradication of mental impurities and the realization of *Nibbāna*.

The first step in this transformative journey is Right View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*) and Right Intention (*Sammā Sankappa*). Right View entails a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the reality of suffering (*dukkha*), its origin, cessation, and the path leading to its cessation.¹⁵

Recognizing the impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) nature of existence helps one develop wisdom and reduce attachment. Right Intention complements this wisdom by encouraging thoughts free from ill will, cruelty, and sensual desire. By consciously choosing to cultivate thoughts of loving-kindness, compassion, and renunciation, one purifies the mind and directs it toward liberation.¹⁶

Moral integrity constitutes the bedrock of a tranquil mind, nurtured by the Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*), Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*), and Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*). Right Speech underscores the need for genuine, compassionate, and constructive communication while refraining from deceit, harsh language, and divisive discourse. Right Action entails abstaining from causing injury and killing living creatures, theft, and immoral behavior. Right Livelihood guarantees that an individual makes a living without inflicting suffering on others.¹⁷

The last aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path focuses on mental training through the Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-sati*), and Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*). Right Effort encompasses keeping on the effort to protect the unwholesome from arising and to cultivate good deeds of mind.¹⁸ Right Mindfulness advances a state of awareness in the present time, allow to observe thoughts and feelings without attachment. Right Concentration means the development of deep mental focus, leading to meditative absorption (*Jhāna*) and ultimately to insight that demolishes ignorance. When these three factors are diligently cultivated, they result in a

Translation of the *Samyutta Nikāya*. Wisdom Publications. 2000. Pp 1524

¹⁵ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. BPS, 1999, pp. 11.

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Nanamoli, *The Path of Purification*, BPS, 2010, p. 23.

¹⁷ Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*. Grove Press, 1974, p. 46.

¹⁸ Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 191.

stable, undisturbed mind that is free from distractions and defilements.¹⁹

Realizing Nibbāna, a condition of perfect tranquility and emancipation, is the pinnacle of this road. The Buddha taught that the mind spontaneously reaches peace when it is released from ignorance, hatred, and greed²⁰. The termination of defilements marks the end of pain, therefore enabling one to live in a very deep inner serenity. The greatest aim of the Buddhist Road is this condition, which transcends all earthly grief. The Noble Eightfold Path is a useful manual for conquering mental ailments therefore impeding inner serenity. Those who develop knowledge, moral discipline, and mental clarity will be free from the bonds of sorrow and enjoy the peace that follows from a pure mind. The great lesson of the Buddha is still ageless and provides a clear road to actual enlightenment and pleasure.

We have to work on the following points if we want to reach inner peace:

I- Maintain the precepts for achieving Inner Peace

II- Cultivating Four Sublime States for a calm and peaceful mind.

III- Contemplating awareness and mindfulness of mental, verbal, and physical actions.

IV-Promoting Ethical Living in Daily Life

2.2.1. Maintain the precepts for achieving inner peace

The ethical precepts in Buddhism perform as a timeless moral framework aimed at fostering inner peace and harmonious coexistence. Whether observed by lay practitioners or monastics, these precepts transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, guiding personal transformation, conflict resolution, community building, and the cultivation of emotional well-being. This presentation explores the multifaceted roles of the precepts, emphasizing their significance in achieving inner peace and social order while addressing their relevance in contemporary ethical discourse.

The Four Noble Truths form the cornerstone of Buddhist teachings on peace and happiness:²¹ such as *Dukkha* (The Truth of Suffering), understanding that pain is a fact of existence. *Samudaya* (The Truth of the Cause of Suffering), understanding that attachment and desire are the causes of suffering, *Samudaya* the Truth of the Cause helps one. *Nirodha* (The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering), realizing that suffering may be stopped, *Nirodha*—the truth of the end of suffering—comes to pass. *Magga* (The Truth, the Path to the End of Suffering), attaching emancipation through the Noble Eightfold Path.²² These

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Analayo, *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*, Windhorse Publications, 2003, pp. 102.

²⁰ Dhammapada, Maggavaggo; Verse 275, The Dhammapada in Daily Life. Dr. Bhaddanta Chekinda. Dhammaduta. 2023. Pp- 580

²¹ Ven. Nivittigala Sumitta Thero (Bhante Sumitta -Understanding Suffering and the Path to Liberation: The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path in Theravāda Buddhism,-<https://www.dhammausa.com/2024/07/the-four-noble-truths-and-noble.html>

²² Ibid-15.

truths provide a systematic approach to overcoming suffering and attaining peace and happiness.

2.2.2. Practical steps to attain peace and happiness

To apply these upper facts practically, we should carry the mindfulness practice in regular meditation lets people stay present and grow in inner tranquillity. Moreover, being aware of Ethical Living, means we should be devoted to the Five Precepts, and behaving honorably and honestly help to foster both personal and social harmony. In addition, letting go of attachments to reduce the desire for material objects, relationships, and results helps one to let go and enter a lighter and freer frame of mind. After that, we should cultivate the development of wisdom (*Paññā*), to realize the impermanence and linked character of existence helps one to lessen suffering and find long-lasting pleasure.

For instance, the virtue of abstention from misleading communication helps to resolve problems and build confidence in society. More generally, following values supports the social fabric. Ethically conscious communities create environments where understanding and teamwork blossom. Many times, these kinds of groups inspire ethical conduct on a more general level by setting models for others.

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF OBSERVING THE PRECEPTS

Among the many psychological advantages, the principles provide are emotional stability and stress reduction. Seeing the values helps to reduce frequent causes of mental stress: guilt and regret. Self-affirmation theory is a psychological theory that focuses on how individuals adapt to information or experiences that are threatening to their self-concept. Claude Steele originally popularized self-affirmation theory in the late 1980s, and it remains a well-studied theory in social psychological research.²³ For example, someone who abstains from destructive behavior is less prone to worry or dread reprisals. Moreover, ethical living helps to create harmony in personal relationships by lowering conflict and so building confidence and trust. These positive dynamics contribute to overall mental well-being, creating a virtuous cycle of ethical behavior and emotional health.

3.1. Precepts as a framework for establishing a compassionate society

The *Brahmajāla Sutta*²⁴ The first discourse in the Dīgha Nikāya in Pitaka presents a profound analysis of morality, meditation, and wisdom, emphasizing ethical conduct as the foundation of spiritual practice. Sutta mentioned sixty-two types of philosophical views, showing how they arise from speculative thinking and attachment. The discourse highlights right conduct (*Sīla*) and the Five Precepts as essential for purity of mind. Purity of mind is the basic point

²³ Steele, C.M (1988). The Psychology of Self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in experimental social psychology*. Pp. 21.

²⁴ *Brahmajāla Sutta, Dialogues of the Buddha: Part I*, translated by T.W. Rhys Davids. Pali Text Society. 1899. Pp-xxv-55, 1.8 & 1.9- pp. 3 – 5.

for inner peace. Before we attain the Nibbana, we need to train our manner with Sila, or morality. Moral concepts should be practiced not only for one day but also for a lifetime. It concludes that true awakening transcends all speculative beliefs, leading to *Nibbāna*, the highest peace.²⁵

3.2. The connection between precept observance and emotional well-being

By observing virtue, you can first achieve happiness and satisfaction for yourself. In addition, by observing virtue, you can bring peace to yourself, your family, and the community around you. *Sila* is a *Pali* word meaning to maintain a certain moral code of conduct, speech, and mind. According to Theravada Buddhism, virtue is classified into five precepts, eight precepts, and ten precepts, depending on their number. Observing the five precepts is a type of virtue that every Buddhist must follow. If a person avoids the five precepts, such as killing others, taking other people's property, destroying other people's families, lying, drinking alcohol, etc., he can make the world, including his family, peaceful. He will certainly be peaceful

3.3. Social order and governance through ethical norms inspired by precepts

Especially in Buddhist countries, the principles have traditionally shaped legal systems and government. Ethical leaders guarantee the welfare of their people by producing equitable laws. For example, the acceptance of Buddhist ethics by King Ashoka throughout his rule shows how principles may direct government to advance social order and harmony.²⁶ Ethical standards motivated by the precepts can help to solve systematic problems including violence, prejudice, and corruption in modern environments. Integration of non-harm and justice ideals into government will help countries to produce more inclusive and fair institutions.²⁷

IV. GLOBAL RELEVANCE OF PRECEPTS IN MODERN ETHICAL DISCOURSE

Social harmony in the modern world depends on ethical behavior, hence the Five Precepts (*Pañcasīla*) in Buddhism offer a universal moral basis. Modern ethical debates on human rights, fairness, and environmental sustainability find resonance in these precepts – abstaining from killing, theft, sexual misbehavior, false speech, and intoxicants.²⁸ Whereas the second supports corporate ethics, the first fit non-violence movements.²⁹ The third preserves gender ethics; the fourth stresses truth in media. Relevant to public

²⁵ Ibid-24.

²⁶ Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 66 – 67.

²⁷ Gombrich, Richard F. (1995), *Buddhist Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*, Kegan Paul, Trench and Company, ISBN 978-0-7103-0444-5

²⁸ Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 67.

²⁹ Keown. Damien, *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*, 2005, pp. 45.

health measures, the fifth precept deals with drug usage.³⁰ These ideas go across cultural lines to encourage a moral life all around. Their applicability in modern conversation highlights the ageless wisdom of Buddhist moral teachings.

4.1. Apply empathy and observance of the five precepts in Buddhism

Deeply entwined with the Five Precepts (*Pañcasīla*), empathy is fundamental in Buddhist ethics. The first precept, not harming, encourages compassion for all creatures.³¹ Avoiding stealing, the second commandment fosters respect for others' rights. The third, refraining from sexual misbehavior, advances dignity and confidence.³² Refrain from deceptive speech, the fourth guarantees honest and sympathetic communication. Avoiding alcohol helps one to maintain awareness and social responsibility. Those who combine empathy with these values help to create a society that is more moral and caring.

Empathy helps us to follow these values as it helps us to grasp their goal. False speech, for instance, can sour ties and confidence, yet, empathy allows us to see the emotional effect of our words. Similarly, refraining from alcohol is not just about self-control but also about making sure that our behavior does not endanger others. Empathy, therefore helps the principles from simple ethical rules to be sincere expressions of caring and responsibility. Combining empathy with values helps one to lead a life consistent with Buddhist ideas. It brings inner calm by lessening the mental problems brought on by immoral behavior and by promoting trust and respect in society, therefore attaining outward harmony. These habits taken together provide a road towards a conscious and compassionate life, therefore improving the environment in which the person lives as well as themselves.³³

4.2. Precepts and consumerism: The struggle against materialism

Practicing the values is much hampered by consumerism and materialism. In a society that accepts exploitation and overconsumption, the principle of abstention from taking what is not given is sometimes undermined. Directly against the Buddhist path of renunciation, advertising and media often encourage aspirations that lead to greed and attachment, therefore fostering desire. This ubiquitous culture of consuming emphasizes monetary gain above spiritual well-being, therefore diverting people from ethical life

3.3. Generational differences in ethical perceptions of precepts

Generational variations in ethical interpretations of Buddhist precepts arise from cultural transformations, social influences, and technological progress. The Five Precepts (*Pañca-sīla*), which govern ethical behavior, are understood variably by older and younger generations. Elders traditionally

³⁰ Powers, Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism, Snow Lion Publication, 2007, p. 233.

³¹ Ibid- 29- pp. 68.

³² Ibid-18- pp. 172.

³³ Sutta Pitaka, Samyutta Nikaya, Salayatanavagga, Samyutta, Matugama, Samyutta, Second Payyavagga, Tenth Sutta, Fifth Precepts, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Kaba Aye Printing House, Myanmar, 2011. pp- 438. (Myanmar language, Vol II).

stress the imperative of abstaining from murdering, thieving, and intoxicants, perceiving these as unequivocal moral obligations.³⁴ Younger persons may adopt a more adaptable perspective, rationalizing sporadic alcohol intake or digital piracy as socially permissible. Societal transformations have influenced these divergent viewpoints.

In rural civilizations, the veneration of non-violence was essential, but urban youngsters confront ethical challenges in a competitive digital landscape.³⁵ Contemporary interpretations of principles consider contextual circumstances, shown in dialogues over vegetarianism and climate ethics.³⁶ Notwithstanding these distinctions, the fundamental substance of the precepts – compassion, and mindfulness – persists in relevance across generations. Ethical perspectives change, although the core ideals of Buddhism persist in guiding practitioners to adapt morality to modern living.

4.4. Cultural and societal barriers to observing precepts

Adhering to the Five Precepts in contemporary culture poses difficulties owing to cultural standards, societal expectations, and economic pressures. In a consumer-oriented society, refraining from intoxicants and dishonest communication can be challenging, as social events frequently include drink, and corporate settings may promote deception for financial gain.³⁷ Moreover, structural disparities compel individuals to engage in immoral behaviors for survival, such as stealing resulting from poverty.³⁸ Cultural relativism also affects the adherence to precepts. In many civilizations, the normalization of meat intake complicates adherence to the non-violence concept of the first precept. Likewise, digital ethics obscure the principle against theft, as online piracy is broadly condoned. Notwithstanding these obstacles, practitioners endeavor to maintain ethical standards by adjusting Buddhist principles to modern socioeconomic contexts.³⁹

4.5. Cultural and societal barriers to observing precepts

Observing the Sila in modern society presents challenges due to cultural norms, social expectations, and economic pressures. In consumer-driven societies, abstaining from intoxicants and false speech can be difficult, as social gatherings often involve alcohol, and business environments may encourage deceit for profit.⁴⁰ Additionally, structural inequalities force individuals into unethical practices for survival, such as theft due to poverty.

Cultural relativism also influences precept observance. In some societies,

³⁴ Ibid- 29, pp. 68.

³⁵ Sallie B. King, *Socially Engaged Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-0824833510. Pp. xiii + 192.

³⁶ Pall Williams & Tribe, *Buddhist Thought*, Routledge, 2000, pp. 74.

³⁷ Ibid-29, pp. 85.

³⁸ Ibid-30, pp. 67.

³⁹ Ibid-37, pp. xiii+102.

⁴⁰ Ibid-29, pp. 86.

meat consumption is normalized, making the first precept's non-violence principle challenging to uphold.⁴¹ Similarly, digital ethics blur the precept against stealing, as online piracy is widely accepted. Despite these barriers, practitioners strive to uphold moral conduct by adapting Buddhist ethics to contemporary societal conditions.

V. THE IMPORTANCE OF FOUR SUBLIME STATES (BRAHMAVIHĀRA) FOR INNER PEACE: CONCEPTS, PRACTICES, AND CHALLENGES IN MODERN SOCIETY

The Four Sublime States referred to as the *Brahmavihāras*, are fundamental to Buddhist ethics and meditation. The four mental states such as loving-kindness (*Mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*Muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), establish a foundation for individual tranquility and the resolution of social challenges. They provide enduring counsel for emotional equilibrium, relational harmony, and communal welfare in the contemporary environment.

5.1. Principles of *Brahmavihāras*

i. *Mettā* (Loving-kindness) - This represents the collective aspiration for all entities to attain happiness and tranquility. It forms the basis for altruism, opposing wrath and animosity.

ii. *Karuṇā* (Compassion) - Compassion compels individuals to mitigate the pain of others without connection or sympathy. It stems from acknowledging the suffering of others as if it were one's own.

iii. *Muditā* (Appreciative joy) - This state celebrates the achievements and joy of others, mitigating feelings of jealousy and envy. It entails experiencing delight in response to the happiness of others, regardless of one's contribution to it.

iv. *Upekkhā* (Equanimity) - A condition of balanced awareness and acceptance, devoid of attachment or aversion, fostering resilience in the face of life's vicissitudes. It entails treating all individuals equitably, with equanimity and composure.

These attributes are referred to as the "boundless states" (*appamañña*) because, in their ideal form, they ought not to be constrained by any selected biases or preconceptions. A mind that has achieved the limitless nature of the *Brahmavihāras* will not possess any animosity based on nationality, race, religion, or class. The cultivation of the *Brahmavihāras* is linked to fortitude and valor. When cultivated, they transform into powerful mechanisms for self-protection and the safeguarding of others, facilitating conflict resolution, fostering healing, and establishing societal peace.⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid-38- pp. 152.

⁴² The Four Sublime States: Contemplations on Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity", by Nyanaponika Thera. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstosight.org/lib/authors/nyanaponika/wheel006.html>

A mind that has achieved the limitless nature of the *Brahmavihāras* will not possess any animosity based on nationality, race, religion, or class. These attributes are regarded as the exalted manifestations of love, sometimes referred to as the Four Immeasurable, the Four Sublime States, and the *Brahmavihāras* or Divine Abodes.⁴³

In Buddhist mythology, *Brahma* is a formidable deity; in Buddhist practice, the four *Brahmavihāras* are linked to fortitude. To cultivate them effectively, practitioners must exhibit strength and even bravery. When cultivated, the *Brahmavihāras* transform into powerful mechanisms that enable individuals to safeguard themselves and others, facilitating conflict resolution, fostering healing, and establishing societal peace.⁴⁴

They represent the appropriate and optimal method of engaging with all sentient entities. The *Brahmavihāras* are elevated mental states that beyond typical emotions, foster qualities advantageous for individual and communal welfare. They provide enduring counsel for emotional equilibrium, relational harmony, and communal welfare in a contemporary context characterized by stress, division, and materialism.

5.2. Practices to cultivate *Brahmavihāras*

Buddhists have created methodical meditation practices to help the *Brahmavihāras* grow:

i. Loving-kindness meditation (*Mettā Bhavanā*): Practitioners of loving-kindness meditation (*Mettā Bhavanā*) repeat lines wishing happiness and serenity for themselves, loved ones, neutral people, and even enemies.

ii. Compassion meditation: In compassion meditation, one shows the suffering of others while developing a real intention to bring them relief.

iii. Appreciative joy meditation: Reflecting on the successes of others helps one to practice grateful happiness instead of competitiveness.

iv. Equanimity meditation: Meditating equanimity helps one grow detached and with balanced judgment by considering the impermanence of all things.

Modern interpretations of these techniques typically combine mindfulness and therapeutic approaches, therefore appealing to people from many backgrounds and points of view.⁴⁵

5.3. Practical methods to cultivate *karuna* and *metta*

Essential for both personal development and social peace are transforming traits of compassion, *karuna*, and loving-kindness. Developing mindfulness,

⁴³ Ibid 44.

⁴⁴ Gil Fronsdal. The Four Faces of Love: The Brahma Viharas <https://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/>

⁴⁵ “Brahmavihara Sutta: The Sublime Attitudes” (AN 10.208), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an10/an10.208.than.html>

increasing empathy, and acting compassionately all help one practice these qualities.

5.3.1. Steps to cultivate karuna

The first step toward compassion is realizing how others feel. Active listening free of evaluation improves empathy. Armstrong points out, “Compassion begins when we step into the shoes of another”.⁴⁶ In compassion meditation, one imagines the pain of others and creates the intention to lessen it. It begins with concentrating on someone close and progressively reaches neutral people and even enemies.⁴⁷

Little deeds like helping someone in need or consoling a friend in trouble nevertheless show compassion. Buddhists stress that even a smile might help one to reduce suffering.⁴⁸ For example, many individuals currently say that our location is not secure, that we wish to live quietly, etc. However, even with their desire to live a peaceful life, their real practice is the opposite. Very recently, we saw that, in the US, the big and beautiful city of Los Angeles was burnt by a forest fire. When we saw that horrible news from the news media, many people felt sadness and prayed for the victims.

5.3.2. Steps to cultivate metta

This meditation technique emphasizes cultivating self-compassion and extending it to others. The procedure entails transmitting affirmative sentiments such as “May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you live in peace”.⁴⁹ Engaging in Gratitude and acknowledging the virtues in oneself and others fosters an optimistic mentality. Recognizing the interdependence of existence cultivates benevolence towards all entities.⁵⁰ *Metta* is expressed in non-harmful actions via activities that prevent damage and enhance well-being. Exhibiting respect and goodwill towards others fortifies relationships and fosters peace.

5.3.3. Cultivating karuna and metta for a peaceful society

Establishing a peaceful society requires people to embrace principles that support harmony and mutual understanding. According to Buddhist theory, two basic ideas for fostering peace are *Metta* (loving-kindness) and *Karuna* (compassion). These qualities encourage gentle and sympathetic behavior, therefore promoting society’s welfare. While *Metta* represents infinite kindness and unwavering love for all living entities, *Karuna* is the honest wants to alleviate the suffering of others.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Armstrong, Karen. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. Anchor, 2011. Pp. 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid-48, pp. 54.

⁴⁸ Compassion: Solidarity of the Heart, https://www.sokaglobal.org/resources/study-materials/buddhist-concepts/compassion.html?utm_source

⁴⁹ Bhante Gunaratana, *Loving-kindness in plain English*, wisdom publication, 2017, pp. 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid 48, pp. 70.

⁵¹ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *In the Buddha’s Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications. ISBN 0-86171-491-1. 2005, pp-pp. 90, 131.

Taken together, they form the pillar of the Buddha's philosophy for social and spiritual health. When people live in *Karuna* and *Metta*, others are motivated to do so as well. Compassionate leadership, for example, promotes moral behavior in societies.⁵² Widespread acts of loving-kindness similarly help to lower societal tensions by substituting mutual respect for animosity. Such behaviors over time help to produce a society that celebrates peace, empathy, and teamwork.

A harmonic and peaceful society depends on the production of *Karuna* and *Metta*. Through everyday integration of these values, people may improve their relationships and have a good impact on their neighborhoods. As the Buddha eloquently advised, "Hatred does not stop by hatred but by love alone." Thus, practicing *Karuna* and *Metta* is not just a personal path but also a shared obligation to create a society anchored in love-kindness.⁵³ Essential behaviors for building a harmonic and loving society are *karuna* and *Metta*. Meditating, showing thanks, and acting compassionately can help people to live out these qualities in everyday life.

True serenity and contentment, Rahula says, "come from the heart that is free from hatred and filled with love." Employing regular practice, *Karuna* and *Metta* may change both people and societies. *Karuna* is the intense care for reducing the pain of other people. It inspires selflessness and compassion. *Metta*, on the other hand, is the unqualified love and kindness directed toward all things, regardless of distinctions.⁵⁴ (Walpola Rahul, 1959, pp-97) These qualities taken together enable people to overcome their prejudices and build relationships grounded on common humanity. When practiced together, *Karuna* and *Metta* foster an environment where cooperation and understanding flourish.

5.3.4. Challenges in practicing Brahmavihāras in modern society

Practicing *Karuna* and *Metta* may encounter obstacles such as personal biases or feelings of resentment. Mindfulness is key to addressing these challenges. Acknowledging negative emotions without judgment allows individuals to transform them into understanding and kindness (Rahula, pp-71).⁵⁵ Developing *Karuna* and *Metta* is not limited to theoretical understanding but requires consistent practice. This practice in the beginning is only reciting words. We are just saying words over and over and over. Some people think that they have to develop the feeling straight away, but that only comes later on with the practice. The instruction is to recite the words over and over again.⁵⁶ Key methods include: Practicing *Metta Bhavana* (loving-kindness

⁵² Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007, pp. 147 – 148.

⁵³ Dr. Bhaddanta Chekinda, *The Dhammapad in Daily Life*, Dhammaduta University, Myanmar, 2023, Chapter I, Yamakavaggo, Verse 5, pp. 10.

⁵⁴ Walpola Rahul, *What the Buddha Taught*, Grove Press, 1959, pp. 97.

⁵⁵ Ibid-56, pp. 71.

⁵⁶ Ven. Dhammarakkhita, *Metta Bhavana- Loving-Kindness Meditation*, Buddha Dhamma

meditation) strengthens the habit of sending positive thoughts to oneself and others, including those with whom one has conflicts. Mindful living, acting with awareness, and speaking kindly help resolve misunderstandings and prevent conflict. For Community Service, engaging in acts of generosity, such as supporting the underprivileged or aiding those in distress, demonstrates compassion in action.

Despite their profound potential, cultivating the *Brahmavihāras* in contemporary settings presents challenges to cultural and social fragmentation. In a world marked by polarization, fostering universal loving-kindness and equanimity can be difficult. Overwhelming suffering- Exposure to global crises through media can lead to compassion fatigue, where individuals feel overwhelmed by the scale of suffering. Materialism and competition- The emphasis on material success often undermines appreciative joy, replacing it with envy or dissatisfaction. Impatience- In fast-paced lifestyles, the gradual cultivation of these states may seem impractical or unappealing.

5.4. Significant and application for inner peace in modern society

The *Brahmavihāras* hold immense potential for fostering inner peace and societal harmony are- Mental health benefits- Studies in psychology have shown that loving-kindness and compassion meditations reduce stress, enhance emotional resilience, and improve overall well-being.⁵⁷ For interpersonal harmony, by cultivating loving-kindness and appreciative joy, individuals can overcome interpersonal conflicts and build healthier relationships. About social transformation- Compassionate actions inspired by the *Brahmavihāras* can address systemic injustices and foster community cohesion. According to the Global perspective- Equanimity offers a balanced approach to navigating global challenges, encouraging a sense of responsibility without despair.

The Four Sublime States represent a timeless ethical and meditative framework that addresses both individual and collective challenges. While modern society poses obstacles to their practice, their potential for fostering inner peace, interpersonal harmony, and societal well-being remains unmatched. By integrating these teachings into education, therapy, and community programs, we can create a more compassionate and balanced world.

VI. THE IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS IN ACTIONS AND MINDFULNESS FOR INNER PEACE CONCEPTS, PRACTICES, AND CHALLENGES IN MODERN SOCIETY

Within Buddhism, mindfulness is the awareness of one's surroundings and self. Along with mindfulness, that is, awareness of the moment free from judgment, it is defined by openness, alertness, and compassion. Many contemplative traditions, particularly Buddhism, depend on these

Association, 2001, pp. 27.

⁵⁷ Fredrickson, Barbara L., et al. "Open Hearts Build Lives: Positive Emotions, induced through Loving-Kindness Meditation, Build Consequential Personal Resources." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 95, no. 5, 2008, pp. 1045–1062.

components; they also help to promote inner serenity and harmonic life.⁵⁸ Awareness of one's bodily, mental, and verbal activity improves self-regulation and develops empathy and compassion, therefore improving both personal and social well-being. In a period of fast change and distraction, developing mindfulness and awareness provides a practical and revolutionary way to reach inner peace in conflict.

6.1. Concepts of awareness and mindfulness

Awareness involves a deliberate focus on one's actions – physical, verbal, and cognitive. This attentiveness mitigates detrimental actions and guarantees adherence to ethical ideals. Mindfulness (*sati*) refers to non-judgmental, present-moment awareness. It encourages individuals to observe thoughts, emotions, and sensations with clarity and equanimity, fostering a balanced response to life's challenges. The ultimate goal of mindfulness and awareness is achieving inner peace, defined as freedom from mental agitation and emotional turbulence. This state enables individuals to remain grounded, resilient, and compassionate.

Basically, the most popular Sutta that we need to practice our awareness and mindfulness is Maha Satipatthana Sutta. The Buddha said this is the only way of purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for reaching the real peace and noble peace, namely the Four Foundation of Mindfulness.⁵⁹

6.2. Practices to cultivate awareness and mindfulness

This includes practices like breath-focused meditation, body scans, and mindful observation of thoughts and emotions. These techniques train the mind to remain present and non-reactive. Practicing mindfulness in verbal actions involves thoughtful, empathetic speech. The Buddhist teaching of *right speech* guides individuals to communicate truthfully, kindly, and constructively. Activities like mindful eating, walking, or working integrate awareness into everyday life, enhancing presence and reducing stress. Writing about daily experiences with an emphasis on mindful observation encourages introspection and awareness of mental patterns.

6.3. Challenges in practicing awareness and mindfulness in modern society

Despite their profound benefits, practicing awareness and mindfulness faces obstacles in contemporary contexts such as Digital Distraction- The ubiquity of technology often fragments attention and undermines the ability to remain present. And Time Constraints, modern lifestyles, marked by busyness, leave little room for consistent mindfulness practices.⁶⁰ Emotional Overload- that

⁵⁸ <https://reliefmh.com/blog/mindfulness-in-action-unlock-greater-clarity-peace-and-resilience-in-everyday-life>

⁵⁹ Sayadaw U Silananda, *The Four Foundation of Mindfulness*, an exposition of the summary, Malaysia, 1990, p. 13.

⁶⁰ **Bradford, B.** No time to think: The impact of smartphone technology on mindfulness and reflection. *International Journal of Management Education*, 2018. 16 (3), 467 – 477.

exposure to global crises and personal stressors can overwhelm individuals, making sustained mindfulness difficult and Superficial Engagement- which is the commodification of mindfulness in the wellness industry sometimes reduces it to a trend, detracting from its depth and transformative potential.

VII. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ETHICAL LIVING IN THE MODERN ERA

Despite these challenges, several strategies can promote the practice of precepts in a modern society, like workshops and courses that can educate individuals about the relevance of precepts in modern life, demonstrating their practical benefits for personal and societal well-being. Integrating mindfulness into daily routines helps individuals stay connected to ethical principles, even in demanding environments. Establishing support networks within urban and rural areas encourages collective commitment to ethical living. Tailoring the application of precepts to contemporary issues, such as digital ethics, can make them more relevant and accessible.⁶¹

7.1. Importance of social ethics in modern society

Social ethics is crucial for maintaining peace and stability in a community. It provides a framework for resolving conflicts, fostering inclusivity, and promoting equality.⁶² Ethical norms help to prevent exploitation and ensure that vulnerable groups are protected. Core Principles of Social Ethics, such as treating every individual with dignity and fairness, taking accountability for one's actions and their impact on others, ensuring equal opportunities and fairness in resource distribution and empathy and Compassion: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others to build stronger relationships.

Regarding Ethical Living Practices, we will minimize environmental impact through conscious consumption, mindful Communication, speaking truthfully and avoiding harmful words, and participating in activities that uplift society, such as volunteering and philanthropy.⁶³ About the Challenges in Ethical Living, we should prevalence of consumerism often conflicts with the principles of simplicity and sustainability, ethical dilemmas arise when personal interests clash with societal expectations⁶⁴ and a Lack of awareness about ethical standards leads to negligence in individual behavior.

7.2. Social ethics in practice

Ethical living can be promoted through education, policy reforms, and community initiatives. Incorporating ethics into the curriculum from an early age can help shape responsible citizens. Public figures and leaders play a

⁶¹ Sutamchai, K., Rowlands, K., & Rees, C. (2020). The Use of Mindfulness to Promote Ethical Decision-Making and Behavior: Empirical Evidence from the Public Sector in Thailand. *Public Administration and Development*, 40 (3), 156 - 167.

⁶² K. Sri Dhammananda Maha Thera, *What Buddhists Believe* expanded 4th edition, 2002, p. 218.

⁶³ Dalai Lama. *Ethics for the New Millennium*. Riverhead Books, 1999, pp. 145.

⁶⁴ Mac Intyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. Pp. 24.

significant role in modeling ethical behavior.⁶⁵

7.3. Dos and don'ts for a peaceful society

7.3.1. Dos

Practice Empathy and Compassion Understand and respect the feelings and experiences of others. Help those in need without expecting anything in return. To Promote Open Communication, encourage honest and respectful dialogue to resolve misunderstandings. Listen actively to others' perspectives. Uphold values such as honesty, kindness, and fairness in daily life. Act responsibly toward others and the environment. Participate in activities that strengthen the community, such as volunteering, cultural events, or neighbourhood improvement projects. To support initiatives that promote justice and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, or social status. Protect the environment by minimizing waste, conserving resources, and promoting green initiatives that benefit the planet. Approach disputes calmly and aim for solutions that benefit all parties. Seek mediation when necessary. Appreciate the efforts of others and express gratitude regularly. Small acts of kindness can inspire positivity in others.

7.3.2. Don'ts

Do not judge or maltreat others based on their race, gender, religion, or social status. Avoid sharing false information, gossip, or negative comments that can incite conflicts or division. Physical or verbal aggression should never be a means to solve problems. Do not prioritize personal gain at the expense of others' well-being or the environment. Avoid unnecessary use of resources, which can lead to inequality and environmental degradation. Stay silent against wrongdoings or oppression.⁶⁶ Your voice can help bring about positive change. Do not label individuals or groups based on unfounded assumptions or biases. Ignoring social problems such as poverty, inequality, and education gaps can lead to long-term issues. Avoid dismissing new ideas or perspectives without understanding them. This attitude can hinder progress and harmony. Avoid taking advantage of others' weaknesses or circumstances for personal benefit.

VIII. BUDDHIST ETHICAL RESPONSES TO MODERN CHALLENGES

We classify other animals and living beings as nature, acting as if we are not part of it. Then we pose the question, "How should we deal with Nature?" We should deal with nature the way we should deal with ourselves! We should not harm ourselves; we should not harm nature...Human beings and nature are inseparable.⁶⁷

Buddhist ethical ideas are adaptable, adapting to fit fresh difficulties and offer guidance on handling the complexity of modern life. Among world

⁶⁵ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin, Hackett Publishing, 1999. Pp. 108.

⁶⁶ Ethics in Buddhist Perspective by K. N. Jayatilleke (BPS Wheel Publication No. 175 / 176), 1972, pp. 8.

⁶⁷ Peter Harvey *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* Cambridge University Press 2000, pg 151.

issues like political conflict, social injustice, climate change, and technological growth, Buddhist ethics provides vital ideas for creating a fair, compassionate, and sustainable society.

The growing wealth gap is a contemporary problem generally brought on by consumerism and materialism. Buddhist ethics stresses reputation, moderation, and compassion to provide a counterbalance to the unrestrained desire for success and riches. Appropriate living and moral values drive people to pick professions that help society and refrain from acts that exploit others. This helps them to choose the right motivation. Buddhism supports economic systems more based on society's peace and well-being than on profit and material accumulation.

The Buddhist emphasis on mindfulness and equanimity offers the required tools to handle contemporary mental health issues. Stress, worry, and the quest for achievement in modern life often lead to mental anguish. Buddhist practices provide people with the skills they need to develop inner peace, resilience, and balance: meditation, mindfulness, and ethical behavior. Buddhist ethics provides a great solution to contemporary issues by addressing mental health via a full framework of ethical conduct, mindfulness, and knowledge.

Buddhism provides moral guidance on appropriate technical use. Fast-changing society, technological developments raise major ethical questions about privacy, artificial intelligence, and the environmental implications of technology. Emphasizing compassion, mindfulness, and ethical decision-making, Buddhism might direct the evolution and use of technology, thereby improving human welfare and environmental sustainability.⁶⁸

8.1. Relevance and application for inner peace in modern society

(i) Mental health benefits: Numerous studies have demonstrated that mindfulness reduces stress, anxiety, and depression while improving emotional resilience.⁶⁹

(ii) Improved Relationships: Mindful communication fosters empathy and reduces conflict, strengthening personal and professional relationships.

(iii) Productivity and Focus: Awareness enhances concentration and decision-making, addressing the challenges of multitasking and distraction in modern work environments.

(iv) Social harmony: By encouraging ethical action and empathetic engagement, mindfulness contributes to building compassionate communities.

8.2. Awareness and empathy amid the U.S. forest fire crisis: A practical impact

For example, the Los Angeles Forest fire caused great misery to innumerable species in January 2025. On social media, however, some responses praising

⁶⁸ Youxin Yan, The Guiding Role of Buddhist Thought in the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, 6th International Conference on Advances in Social Sciences and Sustainable Development (ASSSD 2024), *Journal of Education, Humanities, and Social Science*, Vol 42, 2024.

⁶⁹ Ibid-69, pp. 322.

this tragedy or blaming it on “bad *Kamma*” revealed a worrisome lack of understanding and compassion. True *Dhamma* practice, the Buddha explained, starts with empathy and compassion (*karuṇā*). Rejoicing in others’ suffering reflects ignorance and a hardened heart, not wisdom. We must remember that *Kamma* is complex and not an excuse for judgment or cruelty. Such thoughts and actions, finding joy in others’ suffering or judging their misfortunes, will never lead to inner peace or a harmonious society.

Like consuming poison and expecting others to be injured, the Buddha taught that carrying negative ideas or ill intent toward others just worsens our suffering. Celebrating in the agony of others feeds ignorance, rage, and hatred—the origins of dukkha (suffering). These deeds sow seeds of disturbance in our emotions and our surroundings. Inner tranquility only results from compassion (*karuṇā*), loving-kindness (*Mettā*), and empathy. Buddha preached that, before guiding others, one must ensure they embody the principles they preach. Only by doing so can they earn respect and avoid criticism.⁷⁰ Only through understanding and goodwill can we create a world of peace for ourselves and others. Let us use this moment to cultivate kindness and understanding for all beings, as suffering is universal and calls for unity, not division.

IX. CONCLUSION

Peace and happiness, as understood in Buddhism, do not rely on external factors but arise from inner transformation. By following the Buddha’s teachings and promoting wisdom, ethical conduct, and mindfulness, individuals can transcend suffering and achieve profound states of contentment. These timeless principles offer a pathway to a harmonious life and inspire the potential for universal peace. Awareness of mental and verbal actions and mindfulness are indispensable tools for achieving inner peace and addressing modern societal challenges. While obstacles such as distraction and superficial engagement exist, the potential of these practices to transform individuals and communities remains unparalleled. By integrating mindfulness into education, healthcare, and public policy, society can cultivate a culture of awareness that fosters resilience, harmony, and well-being.

This conference paper underscores the profound relevance of mindfulness and awareness, presenting practical insights for fostering inner peace and addressing contemporary challenges. The Buddha’s teachings illustrate that greed, hatred, and ignorance are interlinked barriers to inner peace. By recognizing and transforming these defilements through ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, individuals can achieve a state of serenity and liberation. The path to peace lies in understanding the true nature of these mental states and diligently practicing the methods prescribed in the Dhamma.

My final motto is: “If you wish to live a peaceful and serene life, stay in the present moment in the best possible way.”

⁷⁰ Dr. Bhaddanta Chekinda, *Attavaggo*, Chapter 12, The Dhammapada in Daily Life, Dhammaduta, 2023, pp. 325.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Ven. Bhante Shakyaputra Sagar Thero*

Abstract:

This paper examines the critical role of inner peace as the cornerstone for achieving sustainable world peace, underscoring the Buddhist perspective that global harmony begins with personal tranquility. Bhante Shakyaputra Sagar Thero emphasizes that inner peace is rooted in a calm mind, balanced emotions, and ethical living. He explores the dual paths of internal and external happiness, advocating for the integration of mindfulness and morality as essential practices to reduce material dependence and enhance emotional resilience. The study identifies three types of individuals – those unaware of the causes of unrest, those who cannot manage them, and those who effectively address them – and provides actionable strategies for cultivating peace through meditation, moral discipline, and self-awareness. A significant contribution of this paper is its exploration of the interplay between inner stability and environmental influence, advocating for harmonious surroundings to complement spiritual practices. The research concludes by stressing the importance of embracing diversity and fostering interfaith understanding to build inclusive, peaceful societies.

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict or violence; it is a profound, positive inner experience. When we discuss global peace, we often overlook a fundamental truth: true peace in the world is only possible when individuals experience peace within themselves.

Keywords: *Buddhist studies, Tipiṭaka, Pāli canon, bhikkhu training, Vinaya rules, meditation practice, Sutta interpretation.*

I. PEACE OF THE INNER SELF

Inner peace manifests through a calm mind, clear thinking, lightness in emotions, a healthy body, an open heart towards service, and kindness in our actions. Inner peace and happiness is a topic that concerns all individuals; it has been a matter of concern since ancient times and is still important for us

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today - to understand how we can be happy. We often think that other people are happier than us, but this is not true. Every individual experiences some form of discomfort or sorrow. The main reason for this is that humans have not correctly understood the source of happiness. No matter where you live, no matter how many material possessions you have in the external world, if you lack peace within you, you will never be able to experience true happiness.

To understand this subject, it is essential to keep two important concepts in mind: “within” and, in this context, there are two main perspectives on living life. The first perspective is to try to keep yourself happy in the external world, which will result in you being happy internally as well. The second perspective is to maintain your inner happiness, this allows you to express that happiness externally as well. Additionally, there is an intermediate path available, where you have the ability to adopt both approaches. You can maintain your happiness through your behavior and speech in the external world while also preserving your inner happiness by remaining continuously aware of the truth that lies beyond the body, mind, and senses. True knowledge is attained when you begin to understand both of these perspectives. We all aspire for peace; we are all in search of joy within ourselves, and for this reason, we prefer to enjoy various experiences. Even the simplest pleasures are associated with the hope of attaining inner peace. However, we sometimes experience that indulging in physical pleasures generates more unrest. Try to think of a pleasant experience that could provide you with lasting happiness and joy. It is not possible to do so. For example, suppose you have a watch. It gives you happiness, but if you lose it, the same thing makes you experience sorrow. You are overly dependent on material objects. You think that after obtaining a particular object or achievement, you will enjoy life and ultimately attain peace. But that never happens. Material objects cannot bring happiness; mental peace does not depend on any external object, and without mental peace, you can never experience true happiness.

In this study, we will first attempt to analyze how our mental peace is disrupted and how our mind remains restless. If we want to understand our emotions correctly, we can learn the art of attaining happiness. There are many individuals in this world who enjoy life in a state of happiness and peace. They can maintain this state because they have learned to establish a balance between the external and internal worlds. Generally, people can be classified into three categories. The first category consists of people who do not understand the reasons for their unrest. The second category includes people who analyze the reasons but are unable to manage or eliminate them. The third category comprises individuals who are capable of knowing and understanding the causes of unrest, and they make efforts to eliminate them. These individuals remain free from internal and external conflicts.

The path to self-realization remains elusive. It is essential to understand that true knowledge and enlightenment come from within. We must cultivate our inner peace and stability, and only then can we reach the highest state of knowledge. The journey may be challenging, but it is ultimately rewarding

when we take charge of our growth and understanding. Until you are eager to understand your inner existence and your internal states, you will not attain true happiness. You need to learn this process.

II. THE ROLE OF MORALITY

Adopting moral values is essential for establishing a peaceful society, as they form the foundation of any community. The principle of morality is simple: Do not treat others in a way that you do not want to be treated yourself. If you do not want your efforts to be hindered, then do not allow others to hinder them, either. If you do not want to be harmed, then avoid causing harm to others as well. It is about maintaining your identity while respecting others.

Morality refers to the social norms and values that guide individuals, their colleagues, communities, and their interactions with the environment. In these interactions, important values are at stake; rules and standards that protect these values; social roles and positions that help promote these values and enforce these rules; and human qualities or abilities that enable us to act accordingly. These moral factors are usually associated with religious practices and social power structures.

A systematic and critical analysis of ethics examines the moral factors that guide human behavior within a particular society or context. Since fishing represents an interaction between humans and aquatic ecosystems, the ethics of fishing pertain to values, rules, duties, and virtues relevant to the well-being of both humans and ecosystems. It provides a significant standard analysis of the ethical issues inherent in this realm of human activities.

When conducting a moral analysis of actual moral values, rules, and duties, these must relate to the fundamental human interests shared by people, regardless of their cultural setting. Moral values can change over time, and moral reasoning raises the question of whether practices that have traditionally and factually been considered legitimate by religion, law, or politics truly deserve recognition. A major feature of the development of ethics over the last century has been the tendency to reevaluate and uproot those moral traditions that have directed interactions between genders, humans and animals, and humans and their environments. Another recent function of ethics is to resist trends in globalization, marketization, and technological advancement that can destroy valuable aspects of biodiversity and cultural identity – and even put human rights at risk. Although these trends are often presented as value-neutral, they carry hidden assumptions that can become potential sources of inequality and abuse.

Morality plays a crucial role in society because it provides individuals and groups with a framework to determine right from wrong, guide behavior, and promote social harmony. Here are some key aspects of the role of morality in society:

Social harmony: Morality helps build shared values and standards that can unite community members. When people follow common moral norms, it fosters the trust and cooperation that are essential for social stability.

Conflict resolution: Moral principles often serve as a basis for resolving

disputes. Society can mediate conflicts and maintain order by establishing rules that are considered fair or just.

Guiding behavior: Morality influences individual behavior by providing guidelines on how to act ethically in various situations. It can also impact personal decisions, professional conduct, and communication within the community.

Promoting welfare: Moral frameworks often emphasize the importance of well-being, encouraging actions that benefit others and seeking to prevent harm. This focus on altruism and empathy can enhance the overall quality of life in society.

Cultural identity: Morality can shape cultural identity and influence traditions and customs. Different societies may have different moral perspectives that contribute to their unique cultural landscapes.

Moral development: Engaging with moral issues promotes critical thinking and ethical reasoning, inspiring individuals to reflect on their values and the impact of their actions.

Social change: Morality can act as a catalyst for social change. Movements advocating for human rights, environmental protection, and social justice often stem from moral imperatives that challenge current norms and inspire progress.

In summary, morality is an integral aspect of how society functions, influencing interpersonal relationships, legal systems, cultural practices, and the overall well-being of communities. It serves as a foundation for ethical behavior, promotes harmony, and directs individuals toward actions that are collectively beneficial.

III. FROM INNER PEACE TO OUTER PEACE

The foundation of global peace starts with inner peace. When a person finds this peaceful space within, global peace can become a reality. Understanding the constant variability of life aids in this journey; the knowledge that everything is ultimately fleeting can free the mind from anxiety. Many events, whether positive or negative, come and go, and this awareness brings a sense of strength, gentleness, and focus.

“Inner peace originates from within the individual, while the external environment shapes our personalities. Therefore, it is essential to seek both.”

We all aspire for more peace, stability, and joy in our lives. Whether it's freeing ourselves from stress, experiencing stability, or spreading positive emotions to others, inner peace provides a unique form of life energy. However, in the quest for spiritual growth and knowledge, it may seem appealing to focus solely on the inner journey, believing that once our mindset changes, the impact of external factors will diminish. We might delude ourselves with the myth that “a calm mind can overcome any obstacle. I don't need the right circumstances to find happiness!” This idea might be suitable for highly enlightened saints, but for most of us, it's impractical.

Inner peace indeed provides a stable foundation; however, we shouldn't ignore the fact that our environment also affects us deeply. If our surroundings are toxic, they can drain our energy and undermine the inner resources we've carefully built. "Your outer world is a reflection of your inner world. Whatever is happening inside you is also reflected in your external experiences."

So, why is it necessary to cultivate both inner and outer peace for lasting happiness? Let's delve deeper into their interrelationship. Inner peace: A stable core

When life feels chaotic and reactive, turning inward can provide stability. Through consistent spiritual practices, such as meditation, journaling, or strolling in nature, we calm our anxious thoughts and reconnect with our essence. In this process, our turbulent emotions calm down. We gain a new perspective on how to respond consciously rather than react instinctively. We are embedded in a depth far beyond the emotional storms caused by temporary circumstances. "When we connect with inner peace, we acquire a wisdom within us that helps us face storms or external challenges."

The development of inner peace fosters spiritual power, which helps shield us from the influence of external circumstances. Our focused core always remains, guiding us back to our inner home. It guides us. We can use this power between happiness and sadness, stability and change. This inner peace gives us the ability to face external storms, allowing us to respond with empowered resilience instead of helpless reactions. We experience the full range of human emotions, but we view negative emotions with compassion before they affect us.

Inner work helps develop a stable mindset that can be trusted regardless of external circumstances. However, it doesn't make us immune, as I can attest from my personal experience. Toxic environments drain our inner reserves.

Here's the problem: no matter how safe you are, the negativity around you lingers within for a long time, and it takes a tremendous amount of energy to protect our inner light. No matter how developed you are on the inside, if you constantly dwell in a toxic environment, it affects you.

Even earthly, evolved beings can become weakened under the influence of an unhealthy environment for long periods. Inner peace makes us more resilient, but it doesn't make us invincible against ongoing attacks on our mental health.

Imagine having to constantly prove that the sky is blue while everyone else insists it's red. Despite your unwavering clarity, it takes a continuous mental effort day and night to reject their consensus. You strive to maintain your truth, but this process is incredibly exhausting and laborious.

A toxic environment gradually impacts our inner balance. It compels us to dip into our spiritual reserves time and again, even as we attempt to replenish them. As a result, our inner light starts to dim, not due to a lack of internal practice but from relentless external erosion. As it's said, even a drop can carve a stone over time.

Nutrition expert Adele Davis says, "Getting enough vitamins and minerals

from within is simple, while external toxins are dangerous.” This principle also applies to spiritual health. Sufficient internal connections provide essential nutrients, while external toxicity depletes them.

Healthy soil supports root growth.

Fortunately, the opposite is also true: healthy external conditions create a nurturing environment for inner peace. A supportive environment not only generates less fatigue but also actively nourishes the development of our entire existence.

Imagine a vibrant garden. Fertile soil, plenty of air and sunlight, along with properly controlled temperature and humidity levels, are all external factors that enable plants to grow. If they are sown in poor, weak soil

and receive inadequate nourishment from their surroundings, they won’t fully develop.

Our mind works similarly. Internal practices sow the seeds of peace and stability; however, when external conditions are favorable for full growth, these seeds thrive rapidly. Likewise, when we are in a harmonious environment and atmosphere, we can blossom. When we communicate with individuals who exude positivity, that positivity reflects within us, too. Thus, while inner peace provides shelter in tough circumstances, a healthy environment actively cultivates more abundant inner peace – not just for survival but for renewal as well.

Lord Buddha taught that “peace comes from within; do not seek it without.” This wisdom lays the foundation for the process of self-discovery. However, a key reason monks and ascetics return to a calm and beautiful environment is that silence supports their spiritual journey.

IV. EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Life is full of diversity, which includes different fruits, animals, and people. We shouldn’t limit existence to uniformity; instead, we should respect and celebrate the diversity of creation with love. The idea of ‘religious tolerance’ is now outdated; we should develop love for each other’s religions rather than just endure them. No religion is great just because it’s ours but because its core elements are significant. Leaders of spiritual and religious communities should work towards ending fanaticism and fostering harmony in our world. A broad perspective on learning about different religions and cultures is essential. Without a spirit of contemplation and universal brotherhood, religion becomes just an external shell.

Diversity enriches our lives in countless ways. It brings different colors into our lives, making it multifaceted. Through diversity, we get the chance to understand and learn about various cultures, which enables us to delve into their different aspects. As a result, we get the opportunity to think from various perspectives.

India is a country rich in diversity, home to numerous religions, cultures, languages, attire, and cuisines. Hence, India’s culture has become vibrant, filled with variations. This diversity has made India culturally rich. If our lives lack

diversity, they become monotonous and dull. We can understand this with a simple example...

If we eat potato curry every day, by the end of the month, we will start to get tired of it, and it will seem tasteless to us. In contrast, if we eat different vegetables every day, like potatoes today, cauliflower tomorrow, and okra the day after, then if we eat potato curry every five to seven days, it will always remain delicious for us. The reason for this is that we have embraced variety in our diet, making our meals colorful and interesting.

This is a common example that helps explain diversity, while the importance of diversity is immense. When we study different cultures and adopt various ideas while living in our own culture, our understanding broadens and our perspective expands, leading to the growth of our intellect.

Diversity makes it possible for cultures to coordinate, allowing us to enrich our own culture by embracing positive elements from each other's cultural traits. In this way, diversity contributes to the richness of our lives.

Ultimately, peace exists within every individual. By seeking the source of this inner peace, we can create a world that honors diversity, kindness, and service. Peaceful individuals will naturally build a peaceful and harmonious society.

Whether we can achieve world peace or not, we have no option but to keep striving in that direction. If anger dominates our minds, we will lose one of the most vital qualities of human intelligence, which is wisdom – the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Currently, anger is one of the most serious problems facing humanity.

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INNER PEACE FOR THE WORLD PEACE

Ven. Congo Pannabodhi*

Abstract:

This paper reads on inner peace for the world peace, in fact this topic draws my attention since I feel that the today's world needs only one thing, 'peace'. Can the Buddhist way of meditation be conducive to peace? All living beings like to be calm physically and mentally, but they lack proper guidance and methods. By following in a gentle way the meditation techniques as taught by the Buddha, it is possible to attain that state of inner peace.

No matter how both smart and civilized the modern individual is, he still confronted to unresolved problems such as economic problem, political turmoil, climate change, epidemic disease, calamity and natural disaster, emotional problems, etc. seeing all these enumerated dilemma has pushed me to select the topic under discussion to provide in a clear manner and simple words a sure way to inner tranquility.

Therefore, I propose the technique of samatha vipassanā as the surest way to make an end to all the concerns of the person seeking happiness. For this purpose, a faithful acceptance of the precepts is of great significance to this journey. With the precepts as a foundation, the mind will be temporarily appeased; this will enable one to select one meditation subject under a qualified teacher to tread the path that leads to the final bliss of Nibbāna. With this attainment, yes, peace is gained for oneself as well as for the entire world.

Keywords: *inner peace, world peace, meditation, precepts, mindfulness, compassion, samatha, vipassana.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to depict the right way to the realization of inner peace for world peace. There is peace in the world when the mind is not polluted by ignorance, hatred, and lust. The reader should understand that today's world is facing serious havoc wrought by the uncontrolled mind. Although the entire

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world needs peace and cries for it, crises and wars are rising here and there. In some parts of the world, people are victims of natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, bushfires, epidemic disease, and other problems related to climate. Hopeless and helpless, the victims have only their eyes to shed tears and minds to lament. What agony? Where to find peace? How? And at what price? They think as such only when they are tormented by events, and once the situation comes to normal they forget their agony and short coming.

Another problem of the modern man is his desire for change and quick results. The absence of calm in him is a great deficiency. Calm begets mental strength. The absence of calm begets impatience, and the impatient man is never satisfied. He always wants something new and startling. He craves variety. He craves for sensations, he is fed on sensations. He continually craves for something fresh, for new methods, new machinery, new drugs, a new way of life, a new ideology. There is no end to this. This modern attitude is symptomatic of a disease – the disease of mental unrest.¹

To soothe his mind, the modern man is maneuvering to appease his needs, but he lacks the proper methods and techniques to quench the thirst of his desiring mind. Even though he has tremendously succeeded in technology, inventions, and science, his mind is still under the sway of ignorance, hatred, and greed. The solution to one need is a cause to another serious problem that he will be confronted to manage, and thus, the entire life on earth is spent on solving our needs, and he dies as if he never existed.

In a world where life is confronted with such a dilemma, we should learn to prepare our journey inwardly to win peace. Such a journey can be possible and successful only if we know the way leading to that state of peace. This being the case, a suggestion on the means to possess so as to tread the path is the concern of this work.

The following chapters are based on the five precepts and meditation as the sole means to cultivate and promote inner peace for a better world. Buddhism, being a practical teaching that surely brings happiness, offers to its followers the eightfold path (right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration) as an antidote against evil in the world born from the ill states of mind. This eightfold path can be summed up into three sets of trainings, which are: virtue, concentration, and wisdom. These trainings are means for the achievement of inner peace.

II.CHAPTER ONE: MORALITY AS A WAY TO INNER PEACE

This chapter is dedicated to the study of morality. It will portray the different kinds of morality with emphasis on that of the laity since they play a very important role in society. Thus, we are going to deal with the five precepts as a means to develop virtue and abandon immoral actions of body, speech, and mind.

¹ Piyadassi, 1991, *Spectrum of Buddhism*, Taipei, Taiwan R. O. C. p. 223.

The Pali word 'sīla', rendered as 'morality' or 'virtue', is a mode of mind and volition manifested in speech or bodily action. It is the foundation of the whole Buddhist practice and the first of the threefold training (virtue, concentration, and wisdom) of the eightfold path. Buddhist morality is not, as it may appear from the negative formulations in the suttas, something negative. And it does not consist in the mere non-committal of the evil actions, but is in each instance the conscious and intentional restraint from the bad actions in question and corresponds to the simultaneously arising volition.² Thanks to the restraint about virtue, the noble disciple will be at peace, which is a state of tranquility, quiet, and harmony. However, there are different classifications of morality, that for fully admitted monks, for novice monks and that of the laity. On special occasions, the laity may observe eight or ten precepts.

2.1. *Panca Sīla* (five precepts)

A precept is a rule or principle that shows how to behave or to conduct oneself uprightly in society. According to S. Phongsawasdi, the word precept means nature. He goes on to say that everything has its nature. The rain will fall during the rainy season. If it does not, then it is not natural. The horse always stays on its feet, even while sleeping. If it lies down, then it is sick and not in its natural state. Therefore, the real meaning of the word precept is preserving the nature of the human being in oneself and refraining from bringing trouble to oneself and others³.

Without question and beyond doubt, the above quotation shows that precepts are genuinely innate to the nature of human beings. From the dharma point of view, peace can be promoted by following the five precepts. Buddhists or non-Buddhists, one should observe the minimum of five precepts (abstaining from killing any living being, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, and from indulging in drunkenness). These precepts bring peace and harmony everywhere. Thus, people do not fear, doubt, or betray those who are observers of these precepts since they are not killers, robbers, harlots, liars, and drunkards but goodhearted people who delight in peace, concord, harmony, unity, and brotherhood. The following points portray what should not be done and the benefits of observing each precept with mindfulness.

2.1.1. Abstaining from Killing

The *Dhamma* is a teaching of nonviolence. It helps to counteract violence in all its aspects. Embracing the teaching of the Buddha requires developing a mind that has as its concern the welfare of all beings without any thought of causing them even the least of suffering. An interesting verse from the *Dhammapada* reads: 'All tremble at violence. All fear death. Comparing oneself with others, do not kill'.⁴ Another passage from the *Sammyutta Nikāya*

² Nyanatiloka, 2011, *Buddhist Dictionary : A Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, Kandy, Sri Lanka, p. 200

³ S. Phongsawasdi, 2007, *Warm Hearted Family*, Patumthani, Thailand, p. 273

⁴ Weragoda Sarada, 1993, *Treasury of Truth : the Illustrated Dhammapada*, Taipei, Tai-

wonderfully explains the above rule, which is conducive to peace and harmony among people:

‘I like to live. I do not like to die. I desire happiness and dislike unhappiness. Suppose someone should kill me; since I like to live and do not like to die, it would not be pleasing and delightful to me. Suppose I too should kill another who likes to live and does not like to die, who desires happiness and does not desire unhappiness, it would not be pleasing and delightful to that other person as well. What is not pleasant and delightful to me is not pleasant and delightful to the other either. How could I inflict upon another that which is not pleasant to me? Having reflected in this manner, he (the noble disciple), on his own refrains from killing and encourages others to refrain from killing. In this manner, his bodily conduct becomes pure in three ways.’⁵

To all beings, life is dear; therefore, no one should deprive another of life. As a matter of fact, the observer of this golden rule is imbued with loving kindness towards all beings without exception. He cannot kill or cause others to do so, even to the extent of saving his own life. He is ready to save, cherish, and offer protection to the weak ones and those in danger. S.Phonggsawasdi also remarks that ‘by nature, humans will not kill. A human who takes life has deviated from the nature of humankind. He has turned animalistic, like tigers, bears, or crocodiles, which have to kill to survive. Therefore, the first precept reminds human beings not to kill to keep our nature’⁶.

2.1.2. Theft

Taking what is not given through different ways like stealing, looting, robbing, taking by force or through violence another property, cheating, and corrupting are different ways of theft condemnable and not acceptable in all human societies. Stealing is a cause of one’s loss, poverty, and regret. Because of such activities, the wrongdoer can be sentenced to die by the king, or otherwise severe punishment may befall him. Instead of practicing such backward actions, let’s all the people practice generosity and charity for a happy mind and society.

People are prompted to theft because of multiple reasons. For some, when the leaders of government are not concerned with the social living of their countrymen, these people who from the start were good may turn into robbers because of their unpurified latent tendency to robbery. They plan and wish to be rich by unlawful ways as stated in the lines above since they are lazy and unable to earn a living from proper ways. Instead of getting involved in such a blameworthy activity, patience and energy should be aroused to build up a praiseworthy activity for living with plain contentedness. They should be energetic at organizing themselves dutiful on administering as well as on

wan p. 277

⁵ *Samyutta Nikāya* quoted in G. P. Malalaseker, 1990, *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* vol V, Sri Lanka, p. 159.

⁶ S. Phonggsawasdi, 2007, *Warm Hearted Family*, Patumthani, Thailand, p. 274.

attending their households and parent with a share from their earnings.

2.1.3. Sexual misconduct

The today's society is overpowered by beauty and fashion, hard it is for people to be chaste and respectful toward another one's partner, daughter, son, etc. but a good fellow man who abstains from unlawful sexual relation consider all beings of opposite sex as his parent and thus he lives in purity and continent. Human society is organized with regulations regarding marriage and partnership, whereas, in the animal kingdom, such organization and regulation do not exist. When it is a period to mate, most male animals are to fight to win over the female. Sometimes, they tore each other with their sharp teeth to the point of killing their opponent just for the satisfaction of their mating instinct. Unlike the animals, a man has that faculty to judge and understand the situation with wisdom to abstain from all illegal sexual activities. He can conclude to be faithful and content with one spouse. This guideline line once sincerely practiced and cultivated within a society the latter a better place to live.

2.1.4. False speech

Truth is a quality, a state of being based on fact. It is that speech which is generated from inward purity and does not tend to deceive or to proclaim falsity based on rumors and untrue as well as unheard stories. Right speech, the third of the eightfold path, involves respect for the truth and for the welfare of others. To observe right speech, the practitioner is called to be attentive on its four aspects: deliberate lie, slandering, harsh speech, and idle talk. The Buddha has emphasized right speech; his instruction to Rahula on account of right speech is of much value:

Then the Blessed One left a little water in the water vessel and asked the venerable Rahula: "Rahula, do you see this little water left in the water vessel?" – "Yes, venerable sir." – "Even so little, Rahula, is the recluseship of those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie."⁷

2.1.5. Intoxicants

Any substance capable of putting a person in a state of confusion is to be abstained from. Drinks, drugs, some ill books, music, movies, and shows are destructive to both mind and body. An intoxicated person is capable of appalling acts, even attacking, harming, or killing his friends, siblings, and parents. Drug seriously affects the addicted person. Its effects can push one to break easily without hesitation the remaining precepts and behave in a devious way closer to that of animals. Right mindfulness is the thoughts based on non-distraction, non-hate, nonviolence, patience, and renunciation; these good qualities of mind cannot be developed when someone is under the sway of intoxicants. Consumers of intoxicants are always angry, rude, cruel, and infatuated. Seeing the danger and disadvantages of intoxication, the disciple of the Buddha avoids to soil his mind.

⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, Ambalatthikarahulovadasutta in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of Majjhima Nikāya*, Massachussetts, USA, p. 523.

These five precepts should be taken with determination so that none of them is broken, energy should be aroused with confidence to keep these moral precepts pure. It is said in the Path of Purification that, “As a hen guards her eggs, or as a yak her tail, or like a darling child, or like an only eye – So you who are engaged, your virtue to protect, be prudent at all times and ever scrupulous.”⁸

For more emphasis in Sallekha Sutta⁹, the Buddha exhorts Cunda on effacement that even though others will be neglectful with regards to the precepts, we should not behave as such. This is how one should be untiringly protecting his morality with such a determination. The nonobservance of the precepts turns men into animals, good and peaceful society into a murderous, fraudulent, and immoral one. No hope for peace nor happiness for an immoral person; he lives lamenting, beating his breast here and hereafter.

This chapter was an analysis of the five laity precepts rendered in brief. These moral precepts are beneficial to both the observer and his society. The following chapter is devoted to inner peace through right concentration.

III. CHAPTER TWO: INNER PEACE THROUGH RIGHT CONCENTRATION

In the first chapter, we talked about morality as a condition for inner peace. An analysis of five precepts of the laity has been given. The present chapter is chiefly based on concentration as a way to peace. This concentration is developed through meditation on the basis of morality. Therefore, some of the meditation subjects and benefits will also be discussed all along this chapter.

For millennia, people from different religious backgrounds have used meditation as a means for gaining a better understanding of their faith, deity, and themselves. However, the meditation taught in these religions is of different kinds, such as silent prayer, reading individually or collectively from the sacred scriptures, concentrating on some holy object, and silent thinking on a topic, etc. Unlike these forms of meditation, the Lord Buddha system is twofold, serenity and insight. This system of meditation helps to uproot the unwholesome tendencies and foster the mind on wholesome objects thanks to the practice of mindfulness (sati).

Meditation or mental culture is the right way to happiness, serenity, and peace. Just as an abandoned house may be the abode of a gang of robbers, evil spirits, insects, etc., so is an uncontrolled mind soiled by ignorance, hatred, and lust. Still another analogy compares our mind with a field; after ploughing and sowing seeds in the field, if there is no care and attention paid to it, the entire field will grow unwanted plants of different kinds, and there will be no hope for harvesting after all. But in the same case, if proper care and intention are paid by weeding the field, nurturing the plants with fertilizers, manure, and regular watering, a fruitful

⁸ Bhikkhu Nānamoli, 2010, Path of Purification (*Visuddhi Magga*), Kandy, Sri Lanka p. 35.

⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, *Sallekha sutta* in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, A Translation of *Majjhima Nikāya*, Massachussetts, USA, p. 123.

harvest is to be gained. The same applies to our minds; if neglected, nothing of transcendental is to develop. But if due care, attention, and patience are paid by nurturing the mind with mindfulness on wholesome objects, peace, quietude, serenity, and happiness will be experienced here and now.

3.1. *Samatha Bhāvanā*

The Pali word ‘*bhāvanā*’ is what in English is generally but rather vaguely called ‘meditation’¹⁰ it is better to be called ‘mental culture or development’ that as a process produces good effects if practiced again and again without stop. Whereas ‘*samatha*’ means ‘tranquility’ or ‘serenity’. It is the concentrated, unshaken, undefiled, and peaceful state of mind. It is called ‘calm’ because it calms down the five hindrances (sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and scruples, and skeptical doubt).

Serenity is won through the practice of the forty Samatha subjects, which are listed in the chart below:

No.	Subjects	Total	Absorptions
1	Kasinas, Ānāpānasati	11	4 Jhānas
2	Anussati	10	Neighborhood concentration
3	Asubhas, The 32 parts	11	1 Jhānas,
4	Metta, Karunā, Mudita	3	3 Jhānas
5	Upekkhā	1	Only the fourth jhānas
6	Ārupas	4	4 Jhānas

This chart comprises all the samatha subjects together with the concentration that each of them is to attain, that is, neighborhood concentration, fine material jhānas concentration, and the immaterial jhānas concentration. However, the meditator is not obliged to take up all these meditation subjects. He or she has to find a good teacher who will assign to him/her a subject related to his temperament. Meditation has multiple benefits, we should earnestly practice until we totally emancipate our mind from the many trials of life. By meditating, we purify the mind, and we become good, happy, and wise. Man as an individual creates society, society creates the world in its different aspects. Therefore, as an individual, if hard work is done to purify and eradicate the self-centered emotions of lust, hate, and delusion, the unbelievable evil problems will cease, and the world will be at peace.

¹⁰ Nyanatiloka, 2011, *Buddhist Dictionary: A Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, Kandy, Sri Lanka, p. 35.

The above forty samatha subjects are taught to purify the mind. As our concern is on inner peace, we suggest discussing the four divine abodes (four Brahma vihāras) from the forty samatha subjects as a sure practice to enhance concentration culminating in tranquility and serenity.

3.2. The four *brahma vihāras* (sublime state)

The four brahma vihāras are also known as ‘four boundless states’ because those who practice these exercises are radiating either lovingkindness, compassion, or sympathetic joy to all beings without limit to all beings without exception.

3.2.1. *Mettā* (lovingkindness, benevolence, goodwill, friendliness, nonviolence)

Mettā is defined as a strong wish for the welfare and happiness of others. It softens one’s own heart. Like a solvent, it melts not only one’s mental pollutants of anger, resentment, and offensiveness but also those of others, thanks to its broad approach of friendship. It can even transform the hostile one into a good friend. *Mettā* should neither be confused with carnal love nor with sentimental affection. It is not an emotional state of mind but rather a beautiful mind filled with concern for the welfare of all beings. Practicing *mettā* will help to identify oneself with all beings, there will be no more differentiation between you and others. A good antidote against ill will, which is one of the causes of insecurity and wars in the world. Let us extend to all those who are in need of it without any condition. Lovingkindness is the only language that our heart can decipher to understand the meaning, it goes from one heart to the other one’s heart. Radiating the thoughts of *mettā* is the only means to silence the sounds of arms and influence even the hardest hearts of the unfriendly to be friendly. Surely, *mettā* is the hope for human happiness and peace and drives the world from darkness to brightness. The following verses are from the *Karaniya mettā sutta*,¹¹ here quoted for reflecting on how to develop *mettā*:

Just as a mother would protect her only child,
At the risk of her own life,
Even so, let him cultivate a boundless
heart towards all beings.
Let thoughts of boundless love pervade
The whole world: above, below, and across
Without any obstructions, without any hatred,
without any enmity.
Whether he stands, walks, sits, or lies down,
As long as he is awake,
He should develop this mindfulness.
This, they say, is the highest conduct here.

¹¹ Kotawila PemalokaThe, 2018, The Great book of protection, colombo, sri Lanka, p. 29.

To meditate on *mettā*, you should extend your loving-kindness towards all beings, sincerely wishing them to be happy and free from danger, free from both physical and mental suffering.

3.2.2. *Karunā*

Mettā, as the first *brahma vihāra*, has its concerned with the wellbeing of others, but *Karunā* is when *mettā* meets the shortcomings and suffering of others. *Karunā* is another dimension of *mettā*. It makes the hearts of the noble quiver when they hear or see those who are subject to suffering and try with an ardent wish to alleviate it. As a result, it helps to discard cruelty.

3.2.3. *Muditā* (sympathetic joy or appreciative joy)

To be glad at others' success is called appreciative joy, the third sublime state. This state of mind arises after meditating on *mettā* and *Karunā*. This congratulatory attitude has the characteristic of being happy and full of joy in others' property, success, progress happiness, and it removes aversion. It has jealousy as the direct enemy and exhilaration as the indirect one.

3.2.4. *Upekkhā* (equanimity)

Upekkhā is the last of the *brahma vihāras*; it is an even-mindedness, mental equipoise. It can also mean to view impartially, that is to say, without aversion or attachment. Equanimity is not hedonic indifference nor a neutral feeling but a well-balanced mind. It keeps the mind aloof from the eight vicissitudes of life (gain and loss, fame and shame, blame and praise, happiness and misery). Its direct enemy is passion, it eliminates clinging and aversion. To meditate on *upekkhā*, you should embrace the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the sorrow-stricken or the prosperous with equanimity while contemplating 'all beings are as they are conditioned by their karma'¹².

The devoted disciple who tirelessly practices the four *brahma vihāras* will develop concentration termed in the above point as absorption. Let us say something on concentration, the last of the eightfold path.

3.3. Concentration (*Samadhi*)

Concentration, the second of the three trainings comprises three factors:

- Right effort: undertaking serenity meditation,
- Right mindfulness: being mindful of the meditation object,
- Right concentration: Concentrating one's mind on the object of meditation.

Concentration is the ability to direct all the effort and attention on one thing without thinking about other things¹³. Yet, Bhante Buddhaghosa claims that concentration is of many sorts and has many various aspects. An answer that attempted to cover it all would accomplish neither its intention nor its

¹² Mehm Tin Mon, 2004, *Buddha Abhidhamma: ultimate science*, Penang, Malaysia, p. 361.

¹³ A S Hornby, 2010, *Oxford advanced Learner's Dictionary*, oxford University Press.

purpose and would, besides, lead to distraction; so we shall confine ourselves to the kind intended here, calling concentration the profitable unification of the mind¹⁴. To the questions asked by Visākhā to the Bhikkhuni Dhammadina to know about concentration and its development, she answered as follows:

‘Unification of mind, friend visākhā, is concentration; the four foundations of mindfulness are the basis of concentration; the four right kinds of striving are the equipment of concentration; the repetition, development, and cultivation of these same states is the development of concentration therein.’¹⁵

It can be clearly understood that concentration is an unwavering state of mind. For its development, the meditator should be aware and in alertness of the arising of unwholesome states of mind that are detrimental to the practice. Through this process, he controls his mind with energy and effort to discard the evils that have arisen in the mind, to prevent the arising of unarisen evil, to develop unarisen good, and to maintain and promote the further growth of good already arisen. This zealous application of mindfulness on his meditation objects brings its fruits, which culminate in quietude, peace, and serenity.

3.4. *Vipassanā bhāvanā*

Insight is the intuitive light flashing forth and exposing the truth of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and the impersonal and unsubstantial nature of the mentality materiality phenomena of existence (*anatta*).

In other words, it is a means to gain the right understanding of reality as it is. To practice vipassanā bhāvanā requires one to know the following:

1. Sevenfold *Visuddhi* - seven stages of purity,
2. *Ti-lakkhana*: three characteristic marks,
3. Threefold *Anupassanā*: three methods of contemplation,
4. Ten *vipassanā-ñānas*: ten insight-knowledges,
5. Threefold *Vimokkha*: three ways of emancipation,
6. Threefold *Vimokkha-mukha*: three doors of emancipations

Thanks to this knowledge, one can gradually proceed to the sevenfold purification for the attainment of the perfect bliss of *Nibbāna*.

In a world where everything is fast, meditation on both samatha and vipassanā is an infallible remedy to the many crises of the world since many of them are caused by the untrained man. Lust, hatred, and delusion are emotional states of our minds; they not only pollute the mind but also interfere with physical health. In most cases, they are responsible for what we call stress. To learn about samatha and vipassanā and to put them in practice is a direct way to end insecurity and suffering from the never-ending cycle of rebirth. Learning

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, 2010, Path of Purification (*Visuddhi Magga*), Kandy, Sri Lanka, p. 81.

¹⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, Cūḷavedalla sutta in The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of Majjhima Nikāya, Massachussetts, USA p. 398 – 9.

and practicing the way of meditation changes the person from an uneducated to an educated one. The Buddha said:

Luminous, bhikkhus, is this mind, but it is defiled by adventitious defilements. The instructed worldling does not understand this as it is; therefore, I say that for the uninstructed worldling, there is no development of the mind.¹⁶ The Pa-Auk Shayadaw says that someone who is uneducated in and ignorant of both the theory and practice of the Dhamma; someone who possesses neither learning nor attainment. The uneducated person needs to be educated about the Four Noble Truths.¹⁷

For peace in the world, human beings should find interest in the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness meditation: ‘the contemplation of the body in the body, of feelings as feelings, mind as mind and mind-objects as mind-objects’¹⁸. The Buddha declares that this is the only way to the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for the gaining of the right path, for the realization of Nibbāna. The zealous practitioner of mindfulness will definitely realize the truth, peace, and happiness from within. For him, there is no more suffering or rebecoming; the culmination of serenity and insight is won.

Lust, hatred, and delusion are emotional states of our minds; they not only pollute the mind but also interfere with physical health. In most cases, they are responsible for what we call stress.

Let’s compare the mind to a white cotton fabric that is soiled by contact with outside dirt of all kinds. Due to its pure white nature, this fabric can be washed with water, detergent, and a man’s hand to get rid of all the dirt and become white and shining. In the same way, the mind can also be purified because it is essentially pure unless we know the proper means and techniques.

The development of mind, otherwise called the ‘stability of mind’, is the training through which one can accurately understand the defilement of the mind and liberate himself from it. The development of insight, which occurs based on the stabilization of the mind by fully concentrating it on a single object, is what is known as comprehension of the mind.

This paper was assigned to examine the conditions of inner peace and world peace. It has two chapters, The First one dealt with the five precepts of the laity. These moral precepts proclaimed and taught by the Master should not be broken on any account. The observance of the precepts is of much importance to the practice of meditation. The second chapter, however, discussed on samatha and vipassanā. Starting with samatha or tranquility, we have listed the forty subjects and their possible attainments, which are either neighborhood

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012, *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikāya*, Massachusetts, USA, p. 98.

¹⁷ Pa-Auk Sayadaw, 2013, *The Workings of Kamma*, Singapore, p. 7.

¹⁸ Maurice Walshe, 1995, *Mahāsātipaṭṭhāna sutta* in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha* a translation of *Dīgha Nikāya*, Massachusetts, USA, p. 335.

concentration or Jhānas absorptions. As a practical meditation subject, we selected the four Brahma vihāras. The vipassanā bhāvanā or insight meditation ends up this chapter with emphasis on the vipassanā knowledge and the four foundations of mindfulness as the only way to true happiness, Nibbāna.

May peace and harmony prevail in the world! May all beings be well and happy!

Namo Buddhaya.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

The pursuit of world peace has long been a shared aspiration of humanity. However, despite various ideologies and philosophies, a key element remains elusive: true peace cannot exist if individuals are unable to achieve inner peace. This inner peace is often hindered by human greed, anger, and delusion. The article explores practical solutions for fostering personal serenity through mindfulness, meditation, silence, awareness, and compassion. Drawing on the lessons of historical figures such as Buddha and King Trần Nhân Tông, it illustrates that nurturing inner peace is a fundamental condition for achieving harmony within communities, nations, and the world at large. This essay highlights the Buddha's profound teachings on peace, nonviolence, and respect for all life. He emphasized the importance of inner peace and self-mastery as the true means of overcoming conflict and establishing harmony.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The year 2024 has passed, leaving behind significant challenges for the global economy. Recent events, from geopolitical conflicts to natural disasters, have reinforced this perception. In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, the need for stability has become more urgent. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, conflicts in Gaza and Africa, natural disasters, inflation, and tensions among major economies like the U.S. and China, the world has witnessed polarization, slower economic growth, and difficulties in finding new growth models. Populism and far-right tendencies have further contributed to the VUCA landscape.¹

The quest for world peace has long been a universal goal. From international treaties to grassroots movements, humanity has sought global harmony. Yet,

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¹ Wikipedia, VUCA, accessed on 24/12/2024 at <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>

conflicts and discord persist. A crucial truth often overlooked is that world peace begins with inner peace. Cultivating inner peace is not just a personal journey but a critical prerequisite for creating a harmonious global society.

II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN INNER AND OUTER PEACE

Inner peace is a state of mental and emotional equilibrium in which an individual feels content, focused, and free from anxiety. This sense of tranquility does not exist in isolation; it profoundly influences how people interact with others. Someone who cultivates inner peace radiates calmness, understanding, and empathy, fostering harmony in their surroundings. When individuals like this form communities, the ripple effect of their positive energy contributes to greater social cohesion, ultimately impacting the broader world.²

Conversely, the absence of inner peace often manifests as frustration, anger, and hostility, which can escalate into interpersonal or societal conflicts. History demonstrates that global disputes frequently arise from individuals or leaders driven by fear, insecurity, or unchecked egos. Wars throughout history have been fueled by leaders pursuing personal ambitions or calculated gains, disregarding humanity and sacrificing countless lives because their hearts were consumed by hatred and desire. Addressing the inner turmoil of individuals is, therefore, a critical strategy for preventing larger-scale conflicts.

A person can only become a true messenger of peace by following the path of peace. It is challenging to promote peace without first living peacefully with oneself and others. Peace is a hallmark of stability and serenity, and it serves as a foundation for the harmonious development of all human qualities, enabling individuals to achieve holistic growth – both physically and mentally. Acting peacefully means fostering the stable and harmonious growth of one's humanity. In this sense, practicing peace within oneself is essential for the ultimate goal of serving peace to others.

Just as someone must possess good health to help others achieve it, inner peace is a prerequisite for spreading peace. The *Dhammapada*, a Buddhist scripture, teaches:

The *Dhammapada* teaches as follows: “One should strive to accomplish/ What one teaches others to do./ Well-controlled oneself, one can /Guide others - self-restraint is hard indeed!”³

This means: “One should treat oneself in the same way one wishes to treat others. Only someone who has skillfully mastered self-discipline – something inherently challenging – can effectively guide and influence others.” According to Venerable Thích Tâm Minh: “The Buddha is a messenger of peace because He possesses all the qualities of such a messenger. He conducted Himself peacefully with others and skillfully maintained peace within Himself, ensuring the health and conditions necessary to serve the cause of peace in the

² Bao Thu, *The true value of life is peace in the soul*, Petro Times magazine (May 11, 2018) accessed December 20, 2024 at [http:// petrotimes.vn](http://petrotimes.vn)

³ Dhammapada, verse No. 159

long term. This is evident in the Buddha's life, which exemplifies tranquility and balance.

The Buddha was a person of peace who acted peacefully in all circumstances. Regarding Himself, He maintained a harmonious balance between body and mind, referred to in Buddhist terminology as the Middle Way (*majjhimāpaṭipadā*). This means that He neither indulged in excessive desires nor subjected Himself to severe hardships. The Buddha lived in moderation, fully understanding the intimate connection between the body and mind, as well as between physical and mental well-being. He recognized that their harmony leads to health and benefit, while discord between them results in illness and disadvantage. His experience taught Him that the mind struggles to achieve clarity and tranquility when the body is weak, and the body cannot remain vibrant and healthy if the mind is consumed by excessive desires or distractions. Thus, He always maintained a balanced and harmonious attitude between body and mind. The Buddha treated Himself with friendliness and peace.”⁴

III. HOW TO MAINTAIN INNER PEACE

3.1. The role of mindfulness

To achieve a state of awakened awareness, one must live with mindfulness. Mindfulness, often translated as “mindful awareness,” refers to the ability to fully perceive the present moment rather than dwelling in the past or anticipating the future. This practice, along with self-awareness, serves as a powerful tool for cultivating inner peace. Activities like meditation, yoga, and deep contemplation help individuals focus inward, achieve clarity, and respond to challenges with calmness.⁵

Many seek psychological relief from life's challenges - business difficulties, personal failures, or family discord - by attending short-term retreats at monasteries or healing centers. “Healing” (a term often used in English) refers to any process that soothes the soul, alleviates pain, mitigates negative emotions, and promotes well-being, helping individuals feel life is worth living again.⁶ The Buddha taught that we must confront reality rather than flee from it because unresolved entanglements will persist.

In *Vipassanā* meditation practice, three steps are essential:

Step One: Observing and Upholding the Five Precepts

The first step toward inner peace involves observing and adhering to the Five Precepts. These precepts provide a moral and ethical foundation, fostering right action, mindfulness, and right speech.

⁴ Thich Tam Minh (2018). *Buddha, the Messenger of Peace*, Hong Duc Publishing House, p. 94.

⁵ Thảo Viên, *What is Mindfulness? Practicing mindfulness to relieve stress and anxiety*. accessed 15 /01/2025 at <https://helloworld.com/tam-ly-tam-than/quan-ly-cang-thang/chanh-niem-la-gi>

⁶ Phong Huynh, *What is healing? How to properly understand healing?*, accessed December 25, 2024 at <https://helloworld.com/tam-ly-tam-than/van-de-tam-ly-tam-than/chua-lanh-la-gi/>

By following these principles, individuals create a disciplined framework for their thoughts and actions, helping them align with a peaceful and virtuous way of life.

Step Two: Taming the Chaotic Mind

After establishing moral discipline, the next step is to gain control over the restless, wandering mind – often referred to as “monkey mind” and “horse thoughts” (tâm viên ý mã) in Buddhist teachings.

A practical method to achieve this is through Ānāpānasati⁷ - Mindfulness of Breathing. By focusing on the natural flow of one’s breath, individuals anchor themselves in the present moment, calming the mind and fostering clarity. This simple yet profound practice allows one to cultivate awareness and regulate emotions, serving as a gateway to deeper meditation and self-awareness. The combined practice of ethical conduct and mindfulness serves as a strong foundation for nurturing inner tranquility and clarity.

3.2. Meditation

Mindfulness and Meditation: Mindfulness practices, such as meditation, guide individuals to concentrate their thoughts and connect with the present moment. These techniques, by reducing stress and promoting self-awareness, enable people to respond to situations with composure and reason. For instance, *Vipassanā*⁸ meditation emphasizes “pure observation” (*sati*), encouraging awareness of the impermanence of the body, emotions, and mind. Practitioners experience phenomena like the five aggregates (*skandhas*), five hindrances, four realities, and the seven factors of enlightenment

Meditation is a path to purify the mind and eliminate unwholesome mental states. The duration of this transformation varies depending on the practitioner’s dedication, but the change is undeniable. It is important to note that this method relies on no deities or divine intervention. As the Buddha said, “Be a lamp unto yourself.” The practitioner must chart their own path and follow it with perseverance.

Research has shown that meditation improves cardiovascular health and longevity. It also addresses psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and emotional instability. For instance, studies indicate that *Vipassanā* meditation enhances psychological well-being (PWB) and life satisfaction (SWLS).

Meditation offers numerous benefits for professionals and leaders. It enhances clarity in thinking, enables sound decision-making, and increases emotional intelligence (EI). In September 2013, Zen master Thích Nhất Hạnh was invited to Google’s headquarters to teach mindfulness. He guided employees to practice mindfulness in the workplace. Google now organizes bi-monthly “Mindful Lunches,” where employees eat in silence except for the sound of a bell.

⁷ Dai An Ban Thu Sutra, Volume 1, Vietnamese version translated by An The Cao, accessed December 24, 2024 at <http://phathocungdung.com>

⁸ S. N. Goenka, *What is Vipassana Meditation?*, accessed December 23, 2024 at <https://thienvipassana.net/what-is-vipassana/>

Other organizations have also integrated mindfulness practices. The U.S. military in Hawaii (2019), the British Royal Navy, and the New Zealand Defense Force have introduced mindfulness training for soldiers to improve focus and resilience.⁹

IV. IS STILLNESS NECESSARY FOR THE MIND?

4.1. Stillness as the foundation of meditation¹⁰

Stillness is a cornerstone of meditative practice, guiding individuals toward inner peace and equipping them with the clarity to face life's ever-changing circumstances. This tranquility, cultivated through mindfulness and meditation, is a path to living calmly and intelligently. For example, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)¹¹ programs have demonstrated effectiveness in alleviating anxiety and improving interpersonal relationships. When adopted collectively, such practices can alleviate societal tensions and foster reconciliation among conflicting groups. Stillness is not merely the absence of external noise; it is an inner silence where one can release chaotic thoughts, worries, and afflictions. This state is not about avoidance or escapism but rather a profound form of self-awareness that allows individuals to reconnect with their essence.

4.2. Emotional regulation through stillness

Practicing stillness reduces impulsivity in thought and action, encouraging a deeper appreciation of life's more meaningful aspects - compassion, love, and connection with others. This state can be achieved through meditation, mindfulness, or simply spending time in a quiet environment to listen to one's inner self.

In Buddhism, the journey toward enlightenment through stillness helps practitioners uncover true values and break free from the attachments and suffering created by their own minds. By embracing this practice, individuals experience reduced stress, learn to slow down, listen more attentively, and become resilient in the face of life's turbulence.

When we practice stillness, we cease to chase illusions or dwell excessively on the past or future. Instead, we fully inhabit the present moment and embrace our true essence - "the state of being."¹² Stillness enables us to find balance, peace, and wisdom, cultivating a foundation for navigating life with calm and intention.

⁹ Ánh Ngọc, How the world spread mindfulness of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh? <http://vnexpress.net/cach-the-gioi-lan-toa-chanh-niem-cua-thien-su-thich-nhat-hanh> 26/01/2022

¹⁰ Hoang Phong, *The silence of meditation*, accessed 24/01/2025 at <http://phatquanghue.vn/Tu-lieu/Lich-su-Phat-Giao/tid/Su-yen-lang-cua-thien-dinh.html>

¹¹ Wikipedia, *Mindfulness-based stress reduction*, accessed 24/01/2025 at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindfulness-based_stress_reduction

¹² Nguyen Khac Linh, *Emotion control skills*, Pace Institute of Management, accessed December 26, 2024 at <http://www.pace.edu.vn>

4.3. Connecting with others

In the digital age, the image of families or friends sitting together but each engrossed in their own phones has become all too familiar. This raises the question: How can we re-establish the bonds of love and connection? Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh has emphasized the importance of establishing true communication. He pointed out that sharing and empathy cannot exist without genuine interaction. True communication is not just about speaking and listening but also about fostering mutual understanding.

Two Fundamental Conditions for Effective Communication: Deep Listening: Listening is not merely hearing with our ears but also listening with our hearts, with the intention of helping the other person ease their suffering. Thich Nhat Hanh referred to this as listening with a heart of love, meaning we are not trapped by judgment or preconceived notions.¹³ Loving Speech: Loving and compassionate words spoken sincerely have the power to heal. They not only allow the listener to feel cared for but also strengthen the bond between individuals.

Thich Nhat Hanh once said:

“To listen with a heart of love is to return to the warmth of home.”¹⁴ When each person cultivates inner peace, tolerance, and compassion, the external world will also become harmonious. This embodies the spirit of the phrase: “When the mind is at peace, the world is at peace.”

When humanity embraces love, tolerance, and understanding, the essence of spring will transcend time, manifesting endlessly in our lives - like the image of the Spring of Maitreya in Buddhist teachings: “Heaven and earth converge in one corner/One night the world stands still and hears the spring back.”¹⁵

A Society of Harmony: A sustainable society is one where its people have the right to share in its benefits and enjoy the cultural and economic achievements of their city and nation. To lead an entire population toward such a harmonious society, where spiritual development and cultural foundations are essential, is the pathway for the revival of Buddhism in today's society, laying the groundwork for tomorrow.¹⁶

4.4. Developing compassion and patience

Compassion begins with stillness, which helps us understand the suffering within ourselves and in others. Through this understanding, we cultivate tolerance and patience, which serve as the cornerstones for building harmonious relationships.

¹³ Thích Nhất Hạnh, (2023) *The Art of Communicating* (Nghệ thuật thiết lập truyền thông), translated by Chan Dat, The gioi publishing House, p.s 55-58

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Bui Giang, (2023) *Nam Viet Sky* (quoted in *Rain from Source*), Literature Publishing House, p. 88.

¹⁶ Nguyen The Dang, *Harmonious Society* accessed January 13, 2025 at <https://thuvien-hoasen.org/p26a22157/72/xa-hoi-hai-hoa>

4.5. Experiencing inner freedom

Greed, anger, and ignorance no longer bind us when we engage in mindful contemplation and observation. This practice enables us to experience greater inner freedom.¹⁷

Stillness is not an act of avoidance but rather a state of profound awareness. As we practice mindfulness, we gradually become calmer, reducing anxieties and mental disturbances. In turn, attaining stillness allows us to be more mindful, gaining clarity about the true nature of life.

4.6. Method to overcome anger

The practice of patience is a direct antidote to anger, yet only the wisdom of emptiness can completely eradicate it. Through cultivating patience and embracing the insight into the nature of emptiness, we can free ourselves from the cycle of anger and its destructive consequences, fostering a more peaceful and balanced existence.

V. THE EXAMPLE OF THE BUDDHA

The result of the Buddha's enlightenment and the deep liberation of his mind under the Assattha tree transformed him into a person of absolute peace (*parinibbuto/parinibbāy*) and total mastery over his consciousness. This result was partly verified by the Buddha himself but is most clearly seen in his daily way of life. In the *Jivaka Sutta*, the *Majjhima Nikāya*, and many other *suttas*, the Enlightened One affirms that he has liberated himself from craving, aversion, and delusion, completely cutting them off so that they no longer arise, just like a sala tree that is completely severed from its roots and cannot grow back.

Buddha taught: "With a mind that is calm, pure, clear, untainted, and free from afflictions, flexible, easy to use, and solid like that. We lead our mind towards the āsava of wisdom.... By understanding like that, perceiving like that, our mind is free from the taints of desire, freed from the taints of being, freed from the taints of ignorance... we come to understand: "I have been liberated".¹⁸

He admitted that he had never harmed anyone, so he did not regret anything. Even when he was crushed by a stone, he still used mindfulness and awareness, patiently refusing to let his mind become depressed. When the Devil came, he still calmly said:

Our goal has been achieved
There is no sadness!
...When awake without worries,
When you sleep, don't be afraid.
Day and night do not arise,

¹⁷ Thích Thiện Hạnh, *Study and Practice stillness*, Nghiên cứu Phật học magazine, 25/11/2024 <https://tapchinhiencuiuphathoc.vn/hoc-va-thuc-hanh-su-tinh-lang.html>

¹⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2020), translated by Ven.Thích Minh Châu dịch, Tôn giáo Publishing House, p. 274 - 275.

Are worries bothering me?¹⁹

He also declared to Saccaka that he had freed himself from the cycle of birth and death because all defilements related to afflictions, the arising of conditioned existence, leading to suffering and aging, death, and rebirth had been cut off at the root. He proclaimed that he had never harmed anyone, so he had no regrets, and when awake, there was no anxiety; when sleeping, there was no fear; day and night, afflictions did not arise to trouble his heart. Because of these qualities, he is described as someone who attained peace and happiness (*khemapattā sukhino*), being present in a state of inner stillness (*ditthadhammabhinibbutā*), overcoming all hatred and fear (*sabberabhayaṭitā*), and transcending all pain and sorrow (*sabbadukkham upaccagā*).²⁰

Here is the true man
 Alerted by angels
 Never be careless,
 In the holy Dharma.
 Seeing fear in attachment,
 In the existence of birth and death.
 Freed from attachment,
 Birth and death are eliminated.
 Be peaceful and peaceful,
 Right now in silence,
 All resentment and fear,
 They overcome;
 All pain and suffering,
 They were all liberated.²¹

The peaceful, mindful, self-controlled way of life is a characteristic of the Buddha and the noble ones in Buddhism. It is the highest reward of correct spiritual effort, something that anyone can aspire to if they cultivate their inner potential and train the body and mind. According to traditional descriptions, it is the profound inner peace of a person who lives fully in the present moment, without the wandering mind seeking the past or projecting desires onto the future. It is the absolute tranquility of a mind that no longer clings to attachments, does not resist independence, is free from all ties, liberated from all dependencies, and is not affected by any condition. The Buddha preached to the Bhikkhus at Savatthi, Anāthapiṇḍika Monastery:

¹⁹ *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (1999) translated by Ven.Thích Minh Châu, Tôn giáo Publishing House, p. 245 - 246.

²⁰ *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (1999) translated by Ven.Thích Minh Châu, Tôn giáo Publishing House, p. 245 - 246.

²¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2012), translated by Venerable Thich Minh Chau, Religion Publishing House, p.1009 - 10.

The past is not sought after,
 The future has no hope,
 The past is over,
 The future has not come yet.
 There is only present dharma,
 The main insight is here.²²

It is the complete purity of someone who no longer has craving, aversion, or delusion; who is free from attachment, has wisdom, and is not inclined to react, argue, or engage in idle talk. This is the way of life of one who has freed themselves from all desires, achieving stillness, clarity, and inner peace, feeling liberation from craving, aversion, and delusion. It is the way of someone who does not cause suffering to themselves or others; in the present, there is no desire, no craving, only tranquility, feeling cool, and experiencing happiness. It is the way of someone who no longer experiences worry or fear, whose mind remains free of afflictions day and night, and whose heart is always full of compassion for all beings.²³ In short, it is the way of life of one who has attained enlightenment, full of love and compassion, and free from all suffering, having transcended birth and death, and attained Nirvana. The Buddha taught: “Bhikkhus, if speaking correctly, a person can say about that person as follows: “This person is free, attains salvation (*pāramippatta*) in the Holy World, is free, is free and attained salvation in the Holy Samadhi; is free, is attained in the Holy Wisdom; to be free, to be saved in the Holy liberation.”²⁴

From the information provided by Uttara, we understand that the Buddha always lived in mindfulness and awareness, fully present in the moment, or living with the reality of what is. He focused on regularly recognizing and awakening to the present phenomena, to what is, without seeking the past or longing for what has yet to come. He lived wholeheartedly in the flowing present moment.²⁵ He was fully awake in every action, with a peaceful and calm inner mind, undisturbed, unaffected, free from all desires and attachments (*abhijjhādomanassa*) tied to the struggles of life. In him, there was no “seer” behind seeing, no “hearer” behind hearing, no “feeler” behind feeling, no “thinker” behind thinking. It can be said that his mindfulness and awakening were exceptionally sharp.

²² *Majjhima Nikāya* (2012), translated by Ven. Thích Minh Châu, Tôn giáo Publishing House, p. 1011 - 1013.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2012) translated by Thích Minh Châu, Tôn Giáo Publishing House, p. 868.

²⁵ Ban Lien Huu, *Bringing the mind back to Mindfulness*, accessed January 12, 2025 at <https://daitunglamhoasen.vn/blog/tin-tuc-2/dua-tam-tro-ve-voi-chanh-niem-99>

VI. COMPASSION AS A CATALYST FOR PEACE

6.1. Compassion and empathy

Inner peace is intricately tied to compassion - the ability to empathize with others and act with kindness.²⁶ A peaceful individual recognizes the shared humanity of all people, transcending barriers of race, religion, and nationality. This mindset is crucial for resolving conflicts as it fosters dialogue, mutual respect, and cooperative problem-solving.

Compassion and Forgiveness: Inner peace grows when individuals cultivate compassion for others and practice forgiveness. Letting go of resentment and judgment creates space for understanding and harmony, both within oneself and in relationships with others.

Compassion is a social emotion that drives people to do their utmost to alleviate the physical, mental, or emotional pain of others and themselves. It reflects sensitivity to the emotional dimensions of others' suffering. When rooted in concepts like fairness, justice, and interdependence, compassion can also encompass a rational aspect.

Compassion includes "feeling for others" and serves as a precursor to empathy - the capacity to "feel as others do" (as opposed to sympathy, which entails "feeling toward others"). In common terms, active compassion embodies a desire to alleviate the suffering of others.

The English term "mercy" means "to share suffering," and it originates from the Latin. The prefix *com-* comes directly from *com*, an ancient version of the preposition and prefix *cum* (=with) in Latin; the segment *-passion* comes from *passus*, the past participle of the deponent verb *pati*, *passus sum*.

According to Thupten Jinpa, compassion is the feeling of concern that arises in us when we encounter someone who needs help or is suffering. It is accompanied by a type of desire (that is, a wish) to see relief or the end of that situation, alongside the motivation (that is, the urge to do something about it). However, compassion is not pity, nor attachment, nor is it the same as empathy, and it is not simply wishful thinking. Compassion is essentially a variant of love.²⁷

Moreover, the more one understands the human condition and the experiences of others, the clearer the path of alignment with suffering becomes.²⁸

Compassion can create feelings of kindness and forgiveness, which can help people have the ability to prevent situations that might cause suffering

²⁶ Ruby Nguyen, *Compassion - The seed to nurture a beautiful soul*, accessed January 12, 2025 at <https://www.rni.institute/blog/long-trac-an>

²⁷ Wikipedia, *Compassion*, accessed 24/12/2024 tại <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/compassion>

²⁸ Cassell, Eric (2009). *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (2nd edition). New York City: Oxford University Press.

and sometimes lead to violence.²⁹ This concept has been illustrated throughout history: the Holocaust, genocide, colonization, etc. A crucial step in these brutal acts seems to be defining the victims as “not human” or “not one of us.”³⁰ In his defense of the potentially destructive nature of passions, Plato compared the human soul to a chariot: intellect is the charioteer, and emotions are the horses, with life being a constant struggle to control emotions.³¹ In his defense of a strong universal morality, Immanuel Kant considered compassion to be a weak and erroneous sentiment. “Such kindness is called softness and should not occur in humans,” he remarked about it.³²

One interpretation of the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ is that it was done out of a desire for compassion, to experience suffering, and to bring about the salvation of humanity; it is also seen as a sacrificial act of compassion by God for His own Son³³. In Islamic tradition, among the foremost attributes of God are mercy and compassion, or, in the formal Arabic language, Rahman and Rahim. Every chapter in the Qur’an, except one, begins with the verse: “In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.”³⁴

In Buddhist thought, the first truth in the Four Noble Truths is the truth of suffering, or *dukkha* (discontent or stress). *Dukkha* is one of the three distinguishing characteristics of all conditioned existence. It arises as a result of not understanding the impermanent nature of *anicca* (the second characteristic) and not understanding that all phenomena are empty of self (*anatta*, the third characteristic).

When a person understands suffering and its origin and realizes that liberation from suffering is possible, renunciation arises. Renunciation then forms the basis for developing compassion for others who are also suffering. This is cultivated in stages: (1) The Four Immeasurables - loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karunā*), joy (*muditā*), equanimity (*upekṣā*) - the compassion we have for those close to us, like friends and family, and the desire to free them from the “suffering of suffering”. This is practiced in the Mahayana tradition and is closely linked with the development of the Bodhicitta mind. The Bodhisattva vow states: “The suffering of sentient beings

²⁹ Dreisoerner, Aljoscha; Junker, Nina Mareen; Van Dick, Rolf), Relationship between elements of Compassion . An Experiment, Study on Happiness magazine (1/ 2021).

³⁰ Diamond, Shira; Ronel, Natti, From Slavery to Emancipation : The case of forgiving Eva Mozes Kor, the survivor after Holocaust . Magazine on Invasion, ill treatment and injuries (14/9 /2019)

³¹ Stuart, Matthew (2013), “Agency: The Revised Account”, Locke’s Metaphysics, Oxford Publishing House pp. 443 – 452.

³² Heim, M.). “Artistic study on the Extremities , American Religious Academy magazine (1/ 9/2003)

³³ Lampert, Khen (2006). Tradition of Compassion: From religious duty to social work, Palgrave Macmillan.

³⁴ *Al-Fatiha* (the opening), translated by Kabir Helminski , accessed 27/1/2025 at <http://sufism.org>

is innumerable, I vow to liberate them all.” The 14th Dalai Lama has said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” However, he also warns that compassion is very difficult to develop.³⁵ In Buddhist thought, the first truth in the Four Noble Truths is the truth of suffering, or *dukkha* (discontent or stress). *Dukkha* is one of the three characteristics that distinguish all conditioned existence. It arises as a consequence of not understanding the impermanent nature of *anicca* (the second characteristic), as well as not understanding that all phenomena are empty of self (*anatta*, the third characteristic). Compassion forms the basis of *Ahimsa*, a core virtue in Indian philosophy and a principle deeply embedded in daily faith and practice. *Ahimsa*, or non-violence, is compassion in action. It entails actively preventing harm to all living beings while also aiding them in overcoming suffering, thereby moving closer to liberation.

6.2. Forgiveness

We are not saints, always ready to accept and forgive everything. In daily life, even the people we love most can sometimes hurt us deeply. Yet forgiveness is a worthwhile act -not only does it bring relief, but it also has significant benefits for our health. Forgiveness as a Path to Healing: A study published in *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* suggests that forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting what happened, reconciling with the one who caused harm, or pretending the harm didn't occur. Instead, forgiveness is a process of releasing the emotional burden.³⁶ As the Buddha once said, “Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.” By forgiving with serenity, you pave the way to love and compassion, enabling yourself to heal and grow emotionally.³⁷

6.3. Leadership methods

6.3.1. The four means of attraction

To manage and lead an organization for the benefit of the greater good, the Buddha taught the Four Means of Attraction: *dāna nīyāma* (the method of generosity); *piyavāca nīyāma* (the method of loving speech); *atthacariya nīyāma* (the method of beneficial actions); *sampasādaniya nīyāma* (the method of establishing harmony). These four methods can be applied individually, depending on the situation, or used together skillfully.³⁸ Indeed, if national leaders were able to implement the teachings of the Buddha, they would be compassionate, virtuous, and wise, receiving the support of the people. In such a case, the country would be peaceful and prosperous. When all the people

³⁵ Margaret Moodian. *Lessons of compassion from Dalai lama*, translated by Tường Anh Xuân Hà, accessed 24/1/2025 at <https://gdptthegioi.net/2016/08/bai-hoc-ve-long-tu-bi-tu-duc-dat-lai-lat-ma/>

³⁶ Thùy Linh, *The power of forgiveness*, accessed 16/01/2025 at <https://vnexpress.net/suc-manh-cua-su-tha-thu->

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Phan Minh Đức, *Buddha's teaching on leadership*, accessed on 15/01/2025 at <https://giacngo.vn/phat-day-ve-phap-lanh-dao> (14/12/2017).

honor their leaders, love their homeland, and the soldiers fight for the country and the people with policies that reflect the people's wishes, society will be stable and prosperous, forming the foundation for strong and thriving politics.

6.3.2. Leadership with compassion

Compassionate leadership is a clear example of how inner peace can create world peace. Leaders who are guided by compassion rather than ambition or fear are more likely to make decisions that prioritize the happiness of all people. Figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama exemplify this principle, proving that inner tranquility can inspire movements toward global harmony.³⁹

The mind is subtle, hard to see,
It races after worldly desires,
The wise protect their minds,
By guarding the mind, they attain peace.⁴⁰

6.3.3. The example of Tran Nhan Tong: In an article, Reverable Thich Thanh An has analyzed Tran Nhan Tong's mindful leadership for a sustainable peace. He wrote, "He (Tran Nhan Tong) loves his people like his children. The Emperor (Tran Nhan Tong) loved his citizens: he always spread his kindness, shed his love, sympathized with sufferings, and considered the people as his kin. By deciding to do this, the Emperor not only gave them his property but also his compassion and his virtue..."

"Through this decision, the Emperor Tran Nhan Tong made use such instruments to bring happiness and peace to himself and give people and build a sustainable peace for our country as well.

"On another level of compassion, the forgiveness for the enemy is the highest practice of loving-kindness meditation, hence we can see that the Emperor was developing compassion through mindfulness in his attitude toward the enemy, even though the North Enemy had invaded our country... Although he had had to face such savage actions from the enemy side, the Emperor forgave the prisoners of war and let them go back to their families.

The Emperor had profound feelings for the sufferings of others. Nobody in the world could forgive their enemies and have deep empathy with them. The Emperor had, however, transformed his angry and hostile attitude to forgiveness and sympathy. This had a profound influence by Buddhism not only on his mind but also on his actions and attitudes. Through the practicing of loving-kindness meditation-Mettabhavana, the Emperor recognized the sufferings which came from unwholesome thoughts as well as the mental pain if someone cannot transform or reduce them.... The only way to transform them is to cultivate our mind in the right path and so read our love and kindness

³⁹ Wikipedia, *Compassionate Leadership*, accessed 15/01/2025 at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compassionate_leadership

⁴⁰ Dhammapada, Verses on Heart, No. 36.

by mindfulness.⁴¹

“The Loving-Kindness Meditation is the highest level of practicing forgiveness. There is no enemy, and there are good relations that can be formed everywhere. The Emperor applied this method in his management of the nation, such that the country would have sustainable peace because the people loved each other, and this helped avoid unnecessary conflicts. The argument by Bayda, E. justified that “Many of our conflicts, both personal and on the global level of politics, come from our inability to break free of underlying cycles of fear and resentment the practice that deal with this most directly is forgiveness...”⁴²

VII. THE ROOTS OF WAR

We have briefly discussed the peace-oriented views of the Buddha, which stem from the foundation of His enlightenment. However, to understand His perspective more clearly, we should examine how He conceived of war. This is because one must thoroughly understand the root causes of war and suffering to form a correct view on happiness and peace. Certainly, the Buddha could not offer any meaningful or practical views on peace if He did⁴³ not clearly understand war and its root causes.

Regarding this issue, the information from the Great Suffering Aggregate discourse in the Middle-Length Discourses (*Majjhima Nikāya*) is extremely helpful. In this discourse, the Buddha points out that wars and conflicts arise from human greed for sensual pleasures. That is to say, it is the desire to satisfy the alluring objects of the senses – such as beautiful sights, pleasant sounds, enticing scents, tastes, and pleasurable sensations – that lead humans into disputes, struggles, wars, and mutual destruction. In other words, it is the craving for sensory pleasures or sensual desire that serves as the root cause of war and conflict between individuals, social classes, or nations. The discourse states:

“Bikkhus, it is due to desire that kings fight with kings, Sakyas with Sakyas, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders, mothers with sons, sons with mothers, fathers with sons, sons with fathers, siblings with siblings, brothers with sisters, sisters with brothers, and friends with friends. When they engage in dispute, argument, and competition, they strike each other with hands, with stones, with clubs, with swords. Here, they move toward death, toward suffering near death. Furthermore, bikkhus, due to desire, wield spears and shields; they carry bows and arrows; they array themselves in battle, and the arrows are aimed and shot at each other, swords are thrown at each other,

⁴¹ Thich Thanh An, (2020) Mindful leadership for a sustainable peace oriented by the Emperor Tran Nhan Tong, Huong Tich magazine, issue No 6, (2020).

⁴² Bayda, E (2006), The Path to Forgiveness. In” Mindful politics .a Buddhist guide to making the World a Better Place, 1st ed. Boston. Wisdom Publication.

⁴³ Ven. Thich Tam Minh, (2018) Buddha, the Messenger of Peace, Hong Duc Publishing House, pp.160 – 161.

and they chop at each other with swords. They shoot each other with arrows, stab each other with swords, and cut off each other's heads with swords. Here, they move toward death, toward suffering near death."⁴⁴

The Venerable Mahā Kaccāna further clarifies the Buddha's position on peace by stating that war arises due to dependent origination - because people are constantly in contact with the external world. Therefore, war is also subject to cessation through dependent origination, meaning that when the six internal sense faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) come into contact with the six external objects (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects, and mental objects), feelings arise. From feelings, perceptions (*saññā*) arise; from perceptions, thoughts (*vitakka*) arise; from thoughts, conceptual proliferations (*papañca*) arise. When conceptual proliferations (or egoistic thoughts) arise, they lead to attachment, clinging, and fixation on those thoughts. From this, latent defilements such as craving (*rāga*), aversion (*paṭigha*), wrong views (*ditṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), pride (*māna*), attachment to existence (*bhavarāga*), and ignorance (*avijjā*) arise, which lead to disputes and war.

From the perspective of dependent origination, Maha Kaccayana continues by saying that war will cease and not exist if the conditions or factors supporting its arising are absent or eliminated.⁴⁵ According to the Buddha, craving or the desire to satisfy sensual pleasures is the cause of all disputes, conflicts, and wars that bring suffering. From the perspective of suffering in war caused by the root of desire, the Buddha advocated ending war and establishing peace through the path of renunciation, controlling desire, and eliminating craving.⁴⁶

Another context indicates that greed, hatred, and ignorance are the roots of all wrongful thoughts and actions, leading individuals into blindness and causing suffering to both themselves and others. These contribute to mental affliction and suffering, not peace and tranquility. Therefore, the Buddha advocated the cessation of greed, the cessation of hatred, and the cessation of ignorance: "...Seeing the harm of greed, Venerable Sir, we declare the cessation of greed. Seeing the harm of hatred, we declare the cessation of hatred. Seeing the harm of ignorance, we declare the cessation of ignorance."⁴⁷

In the century before the birth of the Buddha, the northeastern region of India underwent significant changes that deeply reshaped the geopolitical landscape. At the end of the Buddha's life, King Vidudabha ruled the Kingdom of Kosala with an oppressive regime and massacred the Sakya people, leaving only a few survivors. In this context of societal chaos and aimlessness, the

⁴⁴ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2020), translated by Ven. Thích Minh Châu, Ton Giao Publishing House, p. 103.

⁴⁵ *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (1993), translated by Ven. Thích Minh Châu, Ton Giao Publishing House, p. 272.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Anguttara Nikāya* (2003) translated by Ven. Thích Minh Châu, Ton Giao Publishing House, pp.196 - 197.

Buddha advocated the doctrine of non-harm, rejecting violence in all forms, from collective expression in armed conflict to the subtle provocations of emotions such as anger and malice. He emphasized the doctrine of compassion, the ability to empathize and imagine oneself in the place of others.⁴⁸

According to the Buddha, craving or the desire to satisfy sensual pleasures is the cause of all disputes, conflicts, and wars that bring suffering. From the perspective of suffering in war caused by the root of desire, the Buddha advocated ending war and establishing peace through the path of renunciation, controlling desire, and eliminating craving. Another context indicates that greed, hatred, and ignorance are the roots of all wrongful thoughts and actions, leading individuals into blindness and causing suffering to both themselves and others. These contribute to mental affliction and suffering, not peace and tranquility. Therefore, the Buddha advocated the cessation of greed, the cessation of hatred, and the cessation of ignorance: “...Seeing the harm of greed, Venerable Sir, we declare the cessation of greed. Seeing the harm of hatred, we declare the cessation of hatred. Seeing the harm of ignorance, we declare the cessation of ignorance.” In the century before the birth of the Buddha, the northeastern region of India underwent significant changes that deeply reshaped the geopolitical landscape. At the end of the Buddha’s life, King Vidudabha ruled the Kingdom of Kosala with an oppressive regime and massacred the Sakya people, leaving only a few survivors. In this context of societal chaos and aimlessness, the Buddha advocated the doctrine of non-harm, rejecting violence in all forms, from collective expression in armed conflict to the subtle provocations of emotions such as anger and malice. He emphasized the doctrine of compassion, the ability to empathize and imagine oneself in the place of others.

Punishment, everyone fears,
Losing life, everyone dreads.
Take yourself as an example,
Do not kill, and do not encourage killing.⁴⁹

VIII. THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACE

8.1. The Buddha’s perspective on peace

In countless teachings of the Buddha, his stance on peace is deeply expressed in many stories. In the *Udāna* (the Buddha’s sayings),⁵⁰ it tells the story of the Buddha one morning as he put on his robes and took his alms bowl to go on his alms round in Sāvātthi. The Buddha saw many youths between

⁴⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *Buddhist Perspective on War and Peace*, translated by Thích Văn Phong, accessed 20/01/2025 at <https://tapchinghamienquaphathoc.vn/goc-nhin-dao-phat-ve-chien-tranh-va-hoa-binh.html>.

⁴⁹ *Dhammapada*, verse 129.

50 Buddha’s Saying, *Khuddaka Nikāya*, (2022) translated by Ven. Thich Minh Chau, Hồng Đức Publishing House, p. 150.

Sāvatthi and Jetavana tormenting fish. Upon seeing this, he went to these youths and spoke to them:

“Young men, do you fear suffering? Do you not like suffering?”

“Yes, Venerable Sir, we fear suffering. We do not like suffering.”

The Buddha, then and there, spoke these words:

“If you do not like suffering,

No matter where you are,

Do not commit any evil actions,

In front of others or behind their backs.

If you commit evil actions,

You will suffer.

Those who do not overcome suffering

Even by leaping or running,

Will never be free of pain.”⁵¹

8.2. The collective power of inner peace

While inner peace begins as an individual pursuit, its collective impact cannot be overstated. Imagine a world where schools prioritize emotional intelligence, businesses encourage mindfulness, and governments emphasize compassion in policymaking. Such a change would create a culture where peace is not just an ideal but a vibrant reality.

The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*⁵², mentions that one day the Buddha was sitting under the Beluvalatthika tree in the Great Forest (*Mahāvana*) near the city of Kapilavatthu when a certain Sakya, carrying a staff, wandered around and approached Him, asking: “What is the view of the ascetic, and what does he teach?”

The Buddha replied:

Friend, according to my teaching, in this world with its gods, Māra and Brahmā, with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans, there is no dispute with anyone. The perceptions that might cloud a person do not affect a Brahmin who lives unattached to sensual fetters, free of doubt, rid of all regret, and without craving for existence or non-existence. Friend, this is my view, and this is what I teach.

The account relates that the Sakyan, after hearing this declaration, simply shook his head and walked away. Later, the Buddha recounted the event to his disciples. One of the monks requested an explanation of the statement’s meaning, to which the Buddha taught: “Monks, whatever reason or condition

⁵¹ Buddha’s Saying, *Khuddaka Nikāya*, (2022) translated by Ven. Thich Minh Chau, Hồng Đức Publishing House, p. 150.

⁵² *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* (2012) translated by Ven. Thich Minh Chau, Hồng Đức Publishing House, p. 133.

causes a person to be clouded by fabrications or delusive thoughts, if there is nothing here to delight in, welcome, or cling to, then this is the cessation of craving.”⁵³

The first declaration affirms that a peaceful person is no longer bound by desires, is not obsessed with delusions, and has no doubts or hesitation about anything. They have eradicated all worries and agitation, have no attachment to existence or non-existence, and do not argue with anyone in the world. The second explanation reflects His principle of peace, stating that the delusions (*papañcasannasankhā*) are the root cause of all disputes and wars, and clarifies how to eliminate war and establish peace. The way to do so is not to indulge in, embrace, or cling to the arising of such delusions. This explanation also indirectly shows that war is conditionally arisen, originating in the human mind—the arising and operation of craving (*rāga*), aversion (*dosa*), wrong views (*diṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), pride (*māna*), attachment to existence (*bhavarāga*), and ignorance (*avijjā*), all stemming from the delusions, or the attachment to the self-concept of “I am.”

8.3. Respect for life and the environment of all beings

Another feature that illustrates the Buddha’s peaceful nature and love for peace is His respect for the life and environment of all beings. H. W. Schumann remarks that compassion is the central trait of the Buddha’s character. “The Buddha has a vast compassion directed towards all realms of life...”⁵⁴ He respects the life and happiness of all beings for one simple reason:

Whoever seeks happiness
By harming living beings,
Those who love peace and safety,
In the next life will not be happy.⁵⁵
Whoever seeks happiness
By not killing,
Those who love peace and safety,
In the next life I will be happy.⁵⁶

“All beings love their life, fear death, desire happiness, and hate suffering.” He experienced with His mind that each being has deep attachment to the self (i.e., desiring peace for themselves); therefore, according to Him, if one loves their self, they should not harm the self of others. We read the story of King Pasenadi. At that time, King Pasenadi of Kosala was with Queen Mallika on the rooftop of the royal palace. The King concluded:

⁵³ Ibid, p.134.

⁵⁴ ‘H. W. Schumann, *The Historical Buddha*, Jainendra Prakash Jain at Shri Jainendra Press, 2004, p.203.

⁵⁵ *Dhamapanda*, verse 130.

⁵⁶ *Dhamappada*, verse 131.

I roamed in every direction,
 Across all realms and skies,
 But found no one dearer.
 Than oneself in all lives.
 For everyone, their self
 Is supremely dear and kind.
 Thus, if one loves oneself,
 Let no harm to others bind.⁵⁷
 And always remember the following verse:
 Even if on the battlefield,
 One conquers thousands upon thousands of enemies,
 It is better to conquer oneself-
 Such a victory is truly extraordinary!⁵⁸

The Buddha abandoned killing and avoided causing harm. He laid down weapons, embraced a sense of shame and moral fear, cultivated loving-kindness, and lived with compassion for the happiness of all living beings. He refrained from harming the sprouts of life or damaging plants and trees. The Buddha lived harmoniously with nature, recognizing the sacred essence of plants and even sensing their fear and distress when threatened or harmed. He emphasized cultivating loving-kindness toward all realms, with the resolve not to harm any beings dwelling within them.⁵⁹

Beyond his practice of peaceful living, the Buddha made significant contributions to the cause of lasting peace through his enlightened and compassionate teachings. He also actively or indirectly prevented killings, disputes, and wars that arose during his era. He preached: “While some Samanas and Brahmins, despite giving away alms and offerings, are still alive and harming seeds and trees. Just as seeds are born from roots, seeds are born from tree branches, seeds are born from soil, seeds are born from tree cuttings, and seeds are born from other seeds, and the monk Gotamma does not harm any seeds or trees. Bhikkhus, in this way ordinary people praise the Tathagata”⁶⁰.

Modern movements promoting inner peace, such as International Day of Peace and global meditation initiatives, follow in this spirit. These efforts remind us that personal actions - whether practicing gratitude, resolving conflicts peacefully, or simply being present - contribute to a broader culture of peace.

⁵⁷ *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (1993) translated by Ven.Thích Minh Châu, Ton Giao Publishing House, p.173-174.

⁵⁸ *Dhamappada*, verse 103.

⁵⁹ *Majjhima - Nikāya* (2012) translated by Ven. Thích Minh Châu, Hồng Đức Publishing House, p. 336 - 337.

⁶⁰ *Dīgha Nikāya*, (2013), translated by Ven.Thích Minh Châu, Ton Giao Publishing House, p. 4 - 5.

IX. CONCLUSION

Fostering inner peace is the foundation for achieving world peace. It begins with self-awareness, grows through compassion, and expands through collective action. Each individual has the power to influence the world by cultivating harmony within themselves. By embracing this responsibility, humanity can progress toward a future where peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of genuine understanding and unity.

As the saying goes, “Peace begins with a smile,” but it flourishes through unwavering commitment to inner serenity and compassionate living.

Joyful Are We
 Joyful are we to live,
 Without hatred, amidst the hateful.
 Among those filled with hatred,
 We live without hatred.⁶¹
 And let us not forget:
 Victory breeds hatred,
 Defeat brings suffering.
 The wise live peacefully,
 Beyond both victory and defeat.⁶²

or

What fire equals the blaze of greed?
 What evil surpasses anger?
 What pain compares to clinging?
 What joy equals serenity?⁶³

Inner Peace as the Foundation of World Peace

World peace is not an abstract ideal but a tangible reality that begins within each of us. By nurturing inner peace, we contribute to a collective transformation capable of breaking the cycles of violence and discord. When individuals learn to find harmony within themselves, they inspire and influence others, creating a ripple effect that spreads across the globe. In this interconnected world, every act of inner stillness brings us closer to a future defined by unity and peace. We must remember, the path to world peace starts with the courage to look inward and the commitment to cultivate both heart and mind. Thus, the world becomes peaceful when the human heart is at peace. As the saying goes, “When the mind is at peace, the world is at peace.” The manifestation of Maitreya Buddha occurs when our hearts are filled with joy, compassion,

⁶¹ *Dhamapada*, Verse 197.

⁶² *Dhamapada*, Verse 201.

⁶³ *Dhamapada*, Verse 202.

kindness, sharing, and understanding.⁶⁴

As Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh said, “Happiness is found in every moment: this is the most precious lesson Buddhism offers to the modern West. Now I understand: each of us has a reservoir of spiritual strength we often fail to realize because we have never tapped into it. I will return to this point – the journey of self-discovery to heal ourselves and our era.”⁶⁵ Why not join together to build world peace, starting with the transformation of each individual’s consciousness? Life becomes truly beautiful and worth living when the Buddha’s teachings echo within and around us, guiding and protecting us through the good intentions and actions we undertake in each moment of our existence. The ancient teachings remain eternally valuable, reminding us that inner peace is the prerequisite for world peace.

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⁶⁴ Nguyen Can, (2014) *Dreams and reality*, accessed December 15, 2024 at <https://giacngo.vn/uoc-mo-va-hien-thuc-post24585.html>

⁶⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh, (2020) *Roaming beyond the skies*, Phuonng Nam Publishing House, p101

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A PERSPECTIVE ON BUDDHIST NON-DUALITY: A POTENTIAL PATH FOR CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

Creating and sustaining peace, unity, and inclusivity can be achieved by individuals and communities through the mindset and practices of non-duality. Through this discourse, the Buddhist origins of this phenomenon are disclosed. The unwholesome consequences of duality are briefly explored before a more profound discussion of how a non-dualistic approach to life engenders peace. Reflections are offered on the synergistic relationships among non-duality, inner happiness, and well-being. These can be created through daily mindfulness and meditation practices that journey us inward to non-duality (*advaya*). By flowing with others through “The O Path,” we can move our inner non-duality outward and into peacemaking with others. A final reflection analyzes how non-duality might assist in healing the wounds of non-peace and violence, as well as cultivating sustainable world peace.

Keywords: *Non-duality, Advaya (Sanskrit for non-duality), mindfulness, meditation, emptiness (śūnyatā), bodhisattva, bodhicitta, upaya (skillful means), inter-being, compassion, inclusivity, unity, the middle way, the o path, peace.*

I. OPENING REFLECTION

Achieving world peace seems illusive, although not for humanity’s noble intentions and continual striving. As sentient beings, we rationalize the need for and consequences of global peace, but it seems unattainable and blocked by oppositional beliefs and behaviors, such as disunity, disenfranchisement, and war. However, there is a path to peace in the VESAK 2025 theme: “Unity

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and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development.”

What might such an insight be? World peace begins within each of us if we are “Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace.” That notion is easy to conceptualize but not easy for us to practice. Central to becoming peaceful beings is “non-duality” (*advaya*), which is a primary Buddhist insight. Living it can calm us into inner peace and can generate world peace, unity, and inclusivity.

We explore this insight and these possibilities for peace. We begin by briefly considering duality and its consequences before reflecting on non-duality as a Buddhist insight related to inner and outer peace. Non-duality relates to inner happiness and well-being. Offered are thoughts on a daily practice that takes us individually inward to non-duality and thoughts on a process for moving our sense of *advaya* outward into peacemaking with others. Briefly, we consider how non-duality can heal the wounds of non-peace – of war.

The *Vimalakirti Sutra* is a *Mahayana* Buddhist scripture that examines knowledge, non-duality, and the bodhisattva path. Vimalakirti, a Lay Bodhisattva, demonstrates profound insight, compassion, and adept means (*Upaya*) while residing as a householder, challenging the belief that enlightenment is exclusive to monks or ascetics. He employed his affliction to elucidate the principle of non-duality (*Advaya*). Non-duality in the sutra signifies more than only “not two” or the dismissal of opposites. It transcends all cognitive frameworks. It denotes the comprehension of absolute reality, wherein distinctions like self/ other, good/ bad, and *samsara*/ *nirvana* dissolve. Vimalakirti’s teachings are intricate, urging students to adopt the Mahayana principles of universal compassion and interconnectedness. This document serves as a conduit for disseminating the contradictions of a viable pathway to achieve sustainable peace. Consequently, we present an unconventional viewpoint on non-duality (*Advaya*) as a skillful means (*Upaya*) to attain tranquility and peace.

II. THE PARADOX OF BEING DUALISTIC

We humans are easily seduced into being dualistic in our thinking, emotions, and behaviors. Reality becomes binary: true or false, logical or illogical, happy or sad, loving or disdainful, collaborative or dissenting, helpful or hindering. With dualism, we live an “either-or” existence, which is exemplified in Kierkegaard’s position that we can live either an ethical or an aesthetic life but not both. We “download” our preconceived ideas and cannot see beyond our “blind spots.”

Living in this binary space, we cannot recognize the effects of duality on our individual lives and those of others. Unconsciously, we judge others and may act upon those judgments through rejection, exclusion, prejudice, and violence. Our dualistic mental models become the seeds of a non-peaceful and unhappy existence. Paradoxically, our dualism creates the gap between expressed support for world peace and unpeaceful individual views and behaviors.

To begin a journey out of the dualistic “either-or” life trap, we must see it with an awakened mind that moves us toward “Perfection of Wisdom.” As Thich Nhat Hanh says, “The way out is in,” or the path to liberation is within. Liberating ourselves from dualism is the gateway for a journey inward to peace and happiness and outward to world peace based on unity, inclusivity, and inter-being.

III. THE PEACE OF LEADING A NON-DUALISTIC LIFE

What is a picture of a “non-dualistic” life that nurtures peace within? Without judgment, we interact with others. We practice and embody the 4th Mindfulness Training – “Loving Speech and Deep Listening” to become inclusive unifiers. Such an orientation and practice is identified in Scharmer and Kaufer’s “Matrix of Social Evolution” as Level 4: Generative Listening (Scharmer and Kaufer, pp. 146 - 49). Rather than dualistic debates or accusations, we become “generative” listeners who open our hearts and minds to see with others emerging possibilities, such as those for world peace. Internally and externally, there is a shift from “me” to “we.” Such reflects a conference sub-theme: “Fostering Unity: Collaborative Efforts for Global Harmony.”

This process of shifting from being dualistic to non-dualistic can generate uncomfortable ambiguity, but with awareness, we find comfort in the liminal space between the two. Blurring boundaries, a physical liminal space in architecture transitions us between the exterior and interior of a building. In our process of transitioning to non-dualism, we can exist in emotional, cognitive, and spiritual liminal spaces. However, we find comfort and peace in that space through mindfulness and meditation. Our peacefulness settles into deep, personal happiness.

Gradually and through arising bodhicitta, we become compassionate toward all beings, which can only occur through non-dualism. In the Mahayana tradition, we are bodhisattvas, letting go of dualities and living in the moment. That helps us accept Interdependent Origination (*Pratītyasamutpāda*), which says that everything comes about through connected causes and circumstances, and live in peace with others in what Thich Nhat Hanh calls “inter-being.” It is within this space that we can act IN the world and not ON the world (Kornfield, 367).

IV. NON-DUALITY IN BUDDHISM

Becoming and living a non-dualistic life of peace and happiness is a journey within. Our steps are not labored by forced willfulness but are eased with essential Buddhist beliefs and with aspirations to follow the paths of Bodhisattvas, such as Thich Nhat Hanh. In brief, here we visit those beliefs and a life that can walk us along to non-dualism and peace.

Our notion of non-duality appears in Sanskrit as “*advaya*,” which describes the interconnections of all beings and all that happens. In that intertwining, there are no dualities – only unity and inclusivity. From those arise our senses of inner peace and happiness. As a belief, *Advaya* shapes Madhyamaka, a

philosophy encouraging us to move toward and embrace emptiness.

In the *Mahayana* and other Buddhist traditions, emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) is not a journey to nothingness. Rather, there are no immutable entities or essences in emptiness. In other words, there are no dualities. In our journeys toward *Śūnyatā*, we embrace the inter-being and impermanence of all creatures and phenomena. Consequently, we no longer cling to our opinions and preconceived notions. We become non-dualistic and peaceful.

In our journey into *Śūnyatā*, we walk along the “middle way” and thread ourselves between dualities. In his book about the universalities in Buddhist psychology, Kornfield states, “The middle way is found between all opposites. Rest in the middle way and find well-being wherever you are” (Kornfield, p.369). Happiness and peacefulness are ours within the middle way. We cannot simply will ourselves to exist in the middle way; daily practices of meditation and mindfulness enable us to walk it.

In his continuation, our teacher/ mentor, Thich Nhat Hanh, leads us along the middle way through the practices of engaged Buddhism based on non-duality, inter-being, mindfulness, and peace. We can look to his early book, “The Miracle of Mindfulness,” to begin and sustain mindfulness that leads us to peace within and relieves us from the suffering of duality. In his subsequent book, *Peace Is Every Step*, Thầy affirms our capability of living peacefully within ourselves and with others. An implied thread throughout the book of vignettes reminds us that duality will not bring us to peace. We know well how Thầy established Plum Village as a mindfulness community that helps us live in *Śūnyatā*, non-duality, happiness, and peace.

V. NON-DUALITY AS THE ROOT OF PEACE

Walking the middle way in non-duality, we become profoundly aware of humanity’s interdependence and need for peace. We let go of “us versus them” mentalities that divide us and incite wars. Thầy reminds us that we must overcome our differences and our tendency to blame one another. We can understand this by reading his recollection of finding commonalities with a foreign soldier during the French occupation of Vietnam in the late 1940s. As a young monk, Thầy and the soldier become friends by setting aside dualities and reaching for peace (Thich Nhat Hanh, *At Home in the World*, pg. 46 - 51).

The Buddhist insight of non-duality becomes the root of creating peace within ourselves and with others. Through *advaya*, we let go of seeing only differences with others. Mindfulness and meditation show us paths to walk outward with others toward sustainable world peace. Within ourselves, we feel the happiness, well-being, and compassion that are the seeds of peace.

VI. A NON-DUALISTIC LIFE GENERATES SENSES OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

If you let go completely, you will know complete peace and freedom. Your struggles with the world will have come to an end. Ajahn Chah. Nếu không đeo bám bất cứ cái gì cả, quý vị sẽ hoàn toàn yên ổn và tự do. Và việc quý vị giành giật với đời cũng chấm dứt.” Ajahn Chah. Đạo Sinh dịch Việt.

What, then, do we know about the intertwining of happiness, well-being, and non-duality? Current research emphasizes that happiness and well-being are dynamic concepts grounded in positive affect, significant social connections, and a feeling of purpose. The cultivation of happy emotions, robust connections, and meaningful activities, alongside supportive cultural and societal frameworks, constitutes the basis of enduring well-being. It has expanded considerably in recent decades, incorporating insights from psychology, sociology, and neuroscience. Ed Diener's foundational work (1984; 1999) established subjective well-being as a multifaceted construct, defined by the presence of pleasant emotions, the absence of negative emotions, and elevated life satisfaction. Crucial components affecting happiness include personal variables, situational circumstances, and cultural or societal standards. Barbara Fredrickson (2001) emphasizes that positive emotions – such as joy, appreciation, and hope – broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire and promote human development. Individuals who nurture positive emotions over time create lasting personal impressions that improve long-term well-being.

We are all connected and interdependent, from our relationships to our well-being. According to the *Sigalovada Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 31, trans. Walshe, 1995), “And how, householder, does a wise disciple cover the six directions? The following are the six directions: parents as the East, teachers as the South, spouse and children as the West, friends and associates as the North, servants, workers, and helpers as the Nadir, and ascetics and brahmins as the Zenith. In that way, the wise disciple covers the six directions, making them at peace and free from fear.” (*Dīgha Nikāya* 31: *Sigalovada Sutta*, trans. Walshe, 1995, p. 462). The research additionally concentrated on social linkages and interpersonal relationships. Strong social connections are frequently associated with elevated levels of enjoyment. The Harvard Study of Adult Development, a prominent longitudinal study, indicates that the quality of connections is a significant predictor of health and well-being in later life (Waldinger & Schulz, 2010). Robert Putnam (2000) emphasizes the significance of social capital – trust, networks, and civic engagement – in enhancing well-being at individual and communal levels. Moreover, pleasure encompasses elements of meaning and purpose. Research has distinguished between hedonic well-being (the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain) and eudaimonic well-being (the quest for meaning and self-actualization). Carol Ryff (1989) proposed the eudaimonic paradigm, highlighting human growth, purpose in life, and autonomy as essential components of profound and enduring well-being. Empirical therapies centered on thankfulness (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and acts of kindness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing happiness. These techniques operate by strengthening healthy mental habits, fostering significant relationships, and enhancing self-awareness.

Likewise, in Buddhism, happiness, commonly termed *sukha*, is not merely a transient emotion or external circumstance. Instead, it is associated with inner well-being, cognitive clarity, and moral integrity. In Buddhist traditions, there

are five fundamental components constantly manifest across the teachings.

1. Ethical and moral behavior (*Sīla*): Five precepts for the laypersons define adhering to ethical principles and acting morally. Refraining from detrimental habits and participating in virtuous actions promotes compassion and tranquility. By circumventing the psychological distress induced by the dualities of guilt and regret, practitioners cultivate a robust basis for enduring well-being.
2. Mental training (*Bhāvanā*): Improving the mind with techniques like concentration and mindfulness makes it easier to recognize and deal with dualistic and harmful mental states like anger, desire, ignorance, and unhappiness. As awareness and consciousness increase, so do inner peace and understanding, resulting in a longer-lasting sense of happiness.
3. Wisdom (*Paññā*): A fundamental principle in Buddhism is the acknowledgment of impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). Becoming and living these mitigates the hold of desire and attachment, which frequently results in suffering. Wisdom enables individuals to perceive reality as the way it is, or as-is, facilitating profound calm and joy.
4. Loving-kindness and compassion (*Mettā and Karuṇā*): Authentic happiness also emerges from altruism. Fostering love and compassion – desiring the welfare of all beings and taking action to alleviate their suffering – expands the heart and diminishes egocentrism. This change of perspective cultivates a profound sense of happiness that enhances the well-being of both oneself and others.
5. Equanimity (*Upekkhā*): Equanimity is a composed mental disposition that enables an individual to maintain tranquility and stability in the face of life's unavoidable fluctuations. A reduction in reactivity and emotional extremes allows the mind to attain tranquility, fostering a more steady and lasting happiness.

These elements – ethical living, mental training, insight into reality, compassion, and equanimity – function synergistically to establish the foundation of happiness in Buddhism. The consistent application of these principles leads to a transition from temporary pleasures to a deeper, more unwavering sense of well-being.

As a Buddhist practitioner who was born and raised in the East before studying and working in the West, my (Phe's) perspective on happiness has evolved. I've realized that happiness isn't just about superficial luxuries and transient pleasures. Rather, it comes from nurturing attributes that lead to long-term well-being and harmony. The five primary components that I often contemplated include purpose, contentment, satisfaction, inner peace, and service to others.

1. Purpose: Purpose can be understood as the meaning of life and a call to action for the greater good. A clear purpose provides direction

and meaning, similar to the Right View and Right Intention in the Noble Eightfold Path. As lay practitioners, identifying a life's purpose that is consistent with healthy principles like love, understanding, compassion, and wisdom serves as a guiding beacon amid life's complexity. Having a purpose based on kindness, compassion, and ethical behavior gives greater meaning to everyday actions, whether dedicating oneself to family, a job, or community.

2. **Contentment:** Craving is commonly acknowledged as a source of suffering. Cultivating satisfaction requires identifying "enoughness" – the moment at which we can halt and enjoy what we already have rather than constantly chasing more. It promotes gratitude for what we have and acceptance of what we don't have. This sense of ease encourages gratitude, decreases anxiety, and allows one to live in tune with the moment. By embracing contentment, practitioners transform their normal restlessness into gratitude for life's small blessings.
3. **Satisfaction:** While contentment emphasizes "enoughness," satisfaction focuses on fulfilling one's rightful responsibilities and aspirations. In a lay setting, these responsibilities could include looking after one's family or working hard. Meeting such responsibilities carefully can result in true satisfaction – a sense of fullness and fulfillment that comes from knowing one has done what is expected with honesty and effort. It is also a source of intrinsic motivation to pursue and achieve our goals.
4. **Inner Peace:** Meditation and mindfulness are vital for cultivating inner peace. Your breathing, acting as a bridge between your body and mind, provides the stability you need to navigate any challenges. By training the mind to remain calm, observe, be aware, and embrace, practitioners learn to manage thoughts and emotions without being controlled by them. This tranquility softens the heart and creates the mental space to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. In a lay context, maintaining inner peace helps balance family, career, and social obligations, allowing one to navigate life's challenges with greater composure.
5. **Service to Others:** The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (3rd – 4th cent. CE/ 1993) teaches that "To serve sentient beings is to serve the Buddhas; in truly benefiting others, one makes the highest offering to all Enlightened Ones." (*Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, 3rd – 4th cent. CE/ 1993, p. pp. 642 – 690). The recognition of interdependence is a fundamental foundation of Buddhist philosophy. Serving others, whether out of obligation or genuine generosity, strengthens one's connectedness to the world. Generosity, whether large or small, reduces self-centeredness and increases empathy. Engaging in community service, providing assistance to loved ones, or simply listening with compassion reinforces the notion that our well-being is interconnected.

Together, these five components – purpose, contentment, satisfaction, inner peace, and service – provide a practical path to happiness for anyone.

They remind us that true joy comes from living a balanced life molded by mindfulness, compassion, and ethical values rather than chasing transitory riches. When these qualities are integrated into everyday practice, they bring us into *advaya* and create a non-dual basis for long-term well-being, happiness, and peace for ourselves and those around us. We may wonder how mindfulness as an everyday practice can help us become and live these five practices.

VII. MINDFULNESS AS THE BRIDGE TO A NON-DUALISTIC LIFE

“To practice the Bodhisattva path is to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion more and more greatly.” “Tu tập cho tâm từ bi càng lúc càng rộng lớn thêm lên, đó là thực hành Bồ-tát đạo.” Tuệ Sỹ

As committed educators and *Dharma* practitioners, our efforts in learning, sharing, and teaching mindfulness underscore the incorporation of mindfulness practices and compassion into daily life, such as meditating, gardening, washing dishes, and ‘presencing’ with our family members, friends, and even strangers. Mindfulness is a way of life. We believe that we cannot provide what we do not possess. The essence of our beings is rooted in the principle of non-duality – surpassing the illusion of separation between the self and the external universe. Mindfulness serves as the crucial conduit that directs practitioners toward comprehension and empathy and facilitates attaining non-dualism. Rooted in awareness and self-regulation, mindfulness – defined as the practice of consciously engaging with the present moment with openness, clarity, and compassion – is essential to our approach. Through the practice of mindful breathing, seated meditation, intentional consumption, and purposeful everyday activities, we urge students and fellow practitioners to develop a profound awareness of the continuous flow of thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. By consistently concentrating on the now, one ultimately dispels the notion of the self’s isolation or autonomy from everything else; there is no need to have regrets about the past or anxieties about the future.

As the practices and implementation of mindfulness intensify, they inherently foster increased self-awareness and compassion. When we recognize ourselves as integral to a large, interconnected reality (*Sūnyatā*), our capacity for empathy toward others increases. In this context, compassion – the capacity to alleviate the distress and suffering of others while enhancing their joy – is not solely a moral principle but a natural consequence of seeing the interconnectedness of our suffering with that of others. As the late Zen master articulated, “We inter-are.” This understanding promotes genuine loving-kindness and assists in dissolving the dualities of “us versus them” or “self versus other.” We are interacting with the world instead of imposing our impact upon it: We are acting *IN* the world and not *ON* the world!

Consequently, we promote the incorporation of mindfulness into many aspects of daily life – consuming, laboring, contributing, communicating, and even relaxing. By implementing mindfulness in every experience, practitioners dissolve the distinctions between “practice time” and “everyday life.” This comprehensive approach asserts that non-duality is not solely an abstract idea confined to meditation practices but a dynamic understanding that alters our

perception of ourselves and the universe. Ultimately, mindfulness acts as a conduit to liberation from ingrained dualistic thought patterns. Grounded in compassion, wisdom, and a clear understanding of the interconnection of all phenomena, the technique guides practitioners toward an authentic Buddhist lifestyle – where every moment is an opportunity to experience the essence of non-duality, recognize the overarching unity of reality, and live in peace.

VIII. WALKING OUTWARD WITH OTHERS FROM INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE: THE “O” AS A PATH TO TRAVEL FROM INNER TO WORLD PEACE

Through our non-dualistic inner peace, we can move with others to create world peace. Our daily mindfulness and meditation practices help us live... “the way out is in.” In *Advaya*, we realize that inward and outward directions co-exist. Thus, while we journey inward toward our non-duality and peace, we concurrently journey outward to non-duality and peace with others. Quietly abiding in mindfulness, we see the circularity – a continual flow of peace within and without. We may wonder how that flow could appear in a process for creating world peace.

The “O Path” offers us a flowing and circular way to create peace collectively. Nurturing peace is at the heart of following the O Path, although the process can be lived with other challenges for humanity. With non-dualism, we realize that peace and non-peace are dynamic and organic phenomena that flow across time and human contexts. We can amplify peacemaking through the processes of the O Path, which flows with no beginning or ending – as is the process of peacemaking. If we can let go of the notion of “attainment,” we realize that attaining peace is not an ending. Peace must be continually nurtured within ourselves and with others in the journey to world peace. Together, we can embody and nurture peace through the O Path’s circular elements of recognizing, accepting, embracing, learning, practicing, transforming, sharing, and reimagining.



Bach and Bureau, 2013

Recognizing: We see clearly that dualism prevents us from seeing and accepting others without judgment or blame and that it creates the roots of war. We realize that daily mindfulness and meditation cultivate non-dualism and take us to the emptiness in which we live inter-being with others. We recognize that *advaya* is the root of peace.

Accepting: We accept inter-being and impermanence. In Śūnyatā, we find a generous acceptance of others. This generosity helps us to say, “I accept you for who you are” and “Let’s come together in peace.”

Embracing: Through mindfulness and meditation, we embrace non-duality as the root of inner and universal peace. With compassion, we embrace other people for their uniqueness and humanity.

Learning: We learn how to move our inner non-duality and peace outward through our words and actions. We may learn novel ways to engage with others by finding common ground from which peace can arise.

Practicing: We practice as we learn so that “peace is every step,” as Thầy reminds us. Our daily practices of mindfulness and meditation deepen our non-dualistic roots of peace.

Transforming: With others, we co-create processes and paths for sustainable peace. We transform dualistic views, behaviors, and boundaries that are, ultimately, the roots of war.

Sharing: We share our non-dualism and peace with others. With them, we find common ground from which arise paths to universal and sustainable peace.

Reimagining: Together, we reimagine the possibilities for creating peace, for we realize its illusiveness and mutability. With others living in non-duality, we continually see and implement different ways to peace.

The O as a path to inner and world peace is never-ending. By accepting and living the processes of the O, we transform ourselves and each other to exist in the non-duality from which sustainable peace grows. Also, living in *advaya* is a path to recovering from the tragic consequences of war.

IX. HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR THROUGH NON-DUALITY

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” | “Bóng tối không thể xua tan bóng tối; chỉ ánh sáng mới làm được. Sân hận không thể xua tan sân hận; chỉ có tình thương mới làm được.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

After the Fall of Saigon in 1975, countless Vietnamese citizens sought to escape the resulting political and economic turmoil. Hundreds of thousands fled by land and, especially, by sea – thus earning the moniker “boat people.” Their treacherous voyages across the South China Sea, often in overcrowded vessels, exposed them to storms, pirates, disease, and even death. Many survivors hoped to find temporary refuge in camps located in places like Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, or the Philippines before moving on to more permanent homes. Western countries like the European Union, Canada, and the United States welcomed the survivors, largely due to the efforts of the late

President Jimmy Carter¹ and to underlying non-dualistic beliefs that surfaced in public policymaking.

Although Carter's refugee policies were not universally popular within the United States at that time, he still did the right thing, and they were instrumental in saving countless lives. Spurred by international outcry, his administration increased refugee admission quotas for Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian groups fleeing persecution. He worked closely with international organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to improve rescue operations, enhance living conditions in refugee camps, and streamline resettlement procedures. These actions were guided by a moral obligation to protect individuals endangered by violence and political instability.

Carter's initiatives contributed to the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, which formalized guidelines for admitting refugees with credible concerns of persecution. Although enacted under President Ronald Reagan, the Act drew heavily on Carter-era advocacy and allowed hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees to rebuild their lives in U. S. programs such as the Humanitarian Operation (HO) and the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) – vital lifelines for many – further facilitating the safe emigration of these refugees.

Newly arrived Vietnamese boat people faced daunting linguistic, cultural, and social adjustments. Housing, employment, and emotional traumas posed significant obstacles. Nonetheless, extraordinary resilience and supportive immigrant networks fueled their determination to succeed. Vietnamese-American enclaves took root in Orange County (California), San Jose (California), Orlando (Florida), Houston (Texas), and Northern Virginia near Washington, DC.

Within these communities, cultural and religious institutions proved pivotal for healing. Churches, temples, and community centers preserved time-honored traditions while helping refugees acclimate to a new society. Survivors found solace in sharing their experiences of loss, honoring those lost at sea, and forging a united spirit of hope. Over time, countless former boat people have become physicians, entrepreneurs, educators, or engineers, reshaping perceptions about refugees and highlighting the importance of compassion and open-door policies.

These efforts also facilitated reconciliation between Vietnam and the United States in attempts to put aside the dualities that had created, ultimately, false senses of side-taking and enemies. Successful refugees returned to their homeland to establish businesses, support charities, and foster educational programs. Their actions encouraged dialogue, reduced lingering mistrust, and laid a foundation for more normalized relations, illustrating that collective

¹ James Earl Carter Jr. (October 1, 1924 – December 29, 2024) was an American politician and humanitarian who held the office of the 39th president of the United States from 1977 to 1981.

endeavor and resilience can transform the deepest sorrow into a renewed beginning.

Ultimately, the Vietnamese refugee experience underscores the transformative power of compassion and growth that arises from *advaya* – from overcoming dualism that separates human beings. Their shared hardships fostered empathy and a profound resolve to help others, ensuring that the wounds of war, while never forgotten, served as catalysts for building stronger, kinder communities – and a clearer sense of home within the heart.

X. CLOSING REFLECTION

In its broadest sense, the spirit of Buddhism embraces peace. Writing in 1967 about the devastating effects of war in Vietnam and the possibilities of peace, Thich Nhat Hanh states, “The spirit of openness and tolerance that characterizes Buddhism is a guarantee of its ability to adapt to new ideological situations as they exist in Vietnam to further the cause of peace” (Thich Nhat Hanh, *Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, p. 130). Decades later, and despite the vagaries of humankind, Buddhism’s spirit is the umbrella under which we can collaborate for peace.

More specifically, Buddhist insights give humans the potential to create and sustain peace. Of them all, one is the root from which peace stems – *advaya*, which we know as non-duality. The way out is in, so the way out of non-peace is becoming non-dualistic within ourselves. We can cultivate inner peace for world peace, doing so with daily meditation and mindfulness practice. Reaching out with compassion and peace to others, we might follow the circular O Path to initiate and sustain peace across the globe. Listening to our Buddha natures, we can walk together in peace.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR GLOBAL HARMONY: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON NON-VIOLENCE, COMPASSION, AND MINDFULNESS

U. G. T. D. Jayaweera *

Abstract:

This exploration delves into the profound connection between inner peace and world peace, arguing that the latter is unattainable without the widespread cultivation of the former. It begins by defining inner peace, not as mere tranquility, but as a state of deep understanding, compassion, and wisdom, achieved through self-awareness and mindful living. The paper posits that world peace is not simply the absence of conflict but a positive state of harmonious coexistence, which can only emerge when individuals embody peace within themselves. It then explores practical applications for cultivating individual peace, including mindfulness practices, ethical conduct, and compassionate action. Drawing upon Buddhist teachings, the discussion highlights the importance of understanding the nature of suffering and the interconnectedness of all beings. It examines how Buddhist principles, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, offer a framework for achieving inner peace through self-discipline, wisdom, and compassion. The paper then emphasizes the crucial role of global cooperation and powerful dialogue in fostering understanding and resolving conflicts. It argues that meaningful dialogue, rooted in empathy and respect, can bridge divides and pave the way for peaceful resolutions. To illustrate the power of inner peace in the face of conflict, the Vietnam War is examined as a case study. The paper specifically focuses on the exemplary lives and teachings of Vietnamese Buddhist monks, Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh and Venerable Thich Quang Duc. Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh's advocacy for mindfulness and engaged Buddhism demonstrates

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the potential for inner peace to fuel social action and promote reconciliation. Venerable Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation, a poignant act of protest against war and oppression, serves as a powerful testament to the unwavering commitment to peace that can arise from deep inner peace. His act, while controversial, highlights the extraordinary power of an individual's inner peace to make a profound statement against violence and injustice, impacting the global consciousness. Ultimately, this exploration underscores that the journey to world peace begins within each individual through the cultivation of inner peace.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Cultivating inner peace is the foundational step toward achieving world peace. Inner peace refers to a state of mental and emotional tranquility, where an individual is free from internal conflict, anxiety, and distress. It is characterized by acceptance, mindfulness, and a deep sense of harmony with oneself and the world around them. World peace, on the other hand, is the collective harmony between nations, cultures, and individuals, where conflict is resolved through understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect. The link between these two concepts is undeniable: peace within individuals fosters peaceful interactions and, over time, contributes to the broader peace of society. By nurturing inner peace, we not only create balance in our own lives but also become active participants in building a more peaceful, compassionate world.

II. DISCUSSION

Inner peace is often described as a state of mental and emotional balance, where an individual experiences calm, clarity, and serenity, even amidst external chaos or stress. It involves the cultivation of acceptance, mindfulness, and the ability to let go of negative emotions such as anger, fear, and anxiety. This internal state allows individuals to live in alignment with their values and respond to life's challenges with resilience, compassion, and understanding.

According to the renowned spiritual teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, "Inner peace is the foundation of world peace." He emphasizes that cultivating peace within oneself is essential for creating harmony in the world, as personal peace radiates outward and impacts how we interact with others and address global challenges.

Similarly, the Dalai Lama notes, "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves." This suggests that inner peace is not just a personal benefit but a prerequisite for achieving lasting peace in society and beyond.

Psychologist Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, known for his work in mindfulness, defines inner peace as "the ability to be present and fully engaged with the present moment without judgment." This concept of mindfulness encourages individuals to embrace their thoughts and feelings without being overwhelmed by them, thereby fostering a calm and balanced state of mind.

(Cultivating inner peace) “Inner peace is like marriage. It isn’t a one-mood state, but a particular context for all of them, reflected in one endlessly beloved face.”¹

(Buddhism and ecology) “Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free. True peace with ourselves and with the world around us can only be achieved through the development of mental peace.”²

In essence, inner peace is a profound sense of emotional and mental well-being that results from self-awareness, acceptance, and a commitment to living with equanimity. Cultivating this peace within oneself can lead to greater empathy, stronger relationships, and a more harmonious existence in the larger world.

The Dalai Lama emphasizes this connection between inner and outer peace

“World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just the mere absence of violence. Peace is, I think, the manifestation of human compassion.”

Cultivating inner peace is essential for world peace because it nurtures qualities like compassion, empathy, and tolerance, which help reduce conflict both within individuals and between groups. Here’s a deeper look at why inner peace is important for world peace, backed by references to influential books: *Promotes Emotional Intelligence and Empathy*: Inner peace helps individuals develop emotional intelligence, which is the ability to understand and manage one’s emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of others. In his book *Emotional Intelligence*), Daniel Goleman argues that emotional intelligence is crucial for personal well-being and social harmony.³ People who cultivate emotional intelligence are more likely to handle conflicts peacefully and work collaboratively, reducing the potential for violence and fostering understanding on a global scale. *Encourages Nonviolence and Compassion*: Inner peace is often linked with nonviolence (*ahimsa*), a concept promoted by thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi. In *The Bhagavad Gita*, a foundational text of Hindu philosophy, Krishna teaches the importance of maintaining inner peace through detachment and understanding of the greater good. Gandhi, in his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, reflects on how inner peace fueled his philosophy of nonviolent resistance. If individuals and leaders practiced these principles, world conflicts could be mitigated through peaceful, nonviolent actions.

Mindfulness practices, which are closely related to inner peace, are also key to resolving conflicts peacefully. In *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned Buddhist monk, emphasizes how mindfulness being present and fully aware in the moment can help individuals deal with challenges and conflicts in a non-reactive, peaceful way.⁴ Mindfulness cultivates self-

¹ M. D. Paulfl Fleischman (2010) 22.

² Martine Batchelor and Kerry brown (1992) 111.Ed

³ Daniel Goleman (1996) 35 – 49.

⁴ Thich Nhat Hanh (1975, 1976) 79.

awareness, reduces impulsive reactions, and fosters understanding, which is critical in preventing misunderstandings that can escalate into larger conflicts.

Cultivating inner peace for world peace is deeply rooted in Buddhist teachings, which emphasize the importance of personal transformation, compassion, and interconnectedness. The idea is that when individuals cultivate inner peace, this can ripple out and influence the broader world, fostering harmony and reducing conflict.

some core Buddhist principles that guide this process,

Mindfulness (*Sati*) is the practice of being fully present in the moment, aware of our thoughts, emotions, and actions. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can become more aware of how their actions and reactions affect themselves and others. This awareness can help reduce impulsive or harmful behaviors, allowing for more thoughtful and peaceful interactions.

(A manual of the excellence man) Loving-kindness (*Mettā*) Loving-kindness means wishing others well, with heart filled with good will towards any being that one comes across⁵. In Buddhism, Metta is considered a powerful antidote to hatred and anger. By practicing loving-kindness, individuals begin to see others as interconnected, fostering a sense of unity and reducing divisiveness. The practice of Metta meditation helps people to radiate compassion and goodwill to all beings, creating an atmosphere of peace within and around them. this passage from one of the earliest texts of Buddhism the buddha described how a disciple should cultivate loving-kindness (Buddhism and ecology)

[Then let him think:] 'in joy and safety
let every creature's heart rejoice,
whatever breathing beings there are,
no matter whether timid or bold,
with none expected, long or big
or middle – sized or short or thin
or thick or those seen or unseen
or whether dwelling far or near,
that are or that yet seek to be.
Let every creature's heart rejoice.
Let none betray another's trust
Or offer any slight at all,
Or even let them wish in wrath
Or in revenge each other's ill.'
Thus, as a mother with her life
Will guard her son, her only child,

⁵ Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (2000) 11.

Let him extend without bounds
His heart to every living being.⁶

Compassion (*Karuna*)

Compassion is the deep wish to alleviate the suffering of others. In Buddhism, compassion is not limited to just those we love or those who are kind to us, but extended to all beings, including our enemies. When individuals cultivate compassion, they move away from judgment and hostility, replacing these with understanding and empathy. This approach can create harmony not only within but also between communities and nations.

Non-violence (*Ahimsā*)

Non-violence is a fundamental teaching in Buddhism. The commitment to non-harm extends to our thoughts, words, and actions. Buddhists believe that violence arises from ignorance, anger, and desire. By reducing these harmful mental states, individuals can cultivate inner peace, which in turn, reduces violence in the world. This commitment to non-violence is seen as a way to break cycles of conflict, both within oneself and in society. Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh said two key aspects of Buddhist practice. The first is the Abhidharma door, which focuses on transforming one's internal state to achieve peace. This involves meditation and understanding the mind, with the aim of gaining true insight rather than just accumulating knowledge. True enlightenment comes from understanding, which is fluid and ever evolving. The second aspect is the Buddhist approach to harmony and peace, highlighting the reverence for all forms of life, including humans, animals, plants, minerals, and the Earth itself. This approach calls for respect and compassion toward all living beings and the environment. (Buddhism and ecology)⁷

Interconnectedness (Dependent Origination) Buddhism teaches that all phenomena are interconnected through the principle of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). This means that everything arises due to causes and conditions, and nothing exists in isolation. Understanding this interconnectedness helps people realize that their actions, no matter how small, have far-reaching consequences. This awareness can inspire individuals to act in ways that support global well-being and peace.

Equanimity (*Upekkhā*)

Equanimity is the ability to remain balanced and calm, even in the face of adversity. It is the practice of not being swayed by strong emotions like anger, fear, or attachment. Cultivating equanimity can help individuals navigate the challenges of life with a sense of inner calm, which contributes to peace in both personal and collective contexts. When people maintain equanimity, they are less likely to engage in conflict, and more able to respond to situations with wisdom and compassion.

⁶ Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown (1992) 4.

⁷ Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown (1992) 100 – 101.

The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path offers a systematic framework for cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. By following this path, individuals can reduce suffering in their own lives and contribute to a more peaceful world. The path consists of right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. These guidelines help individuals live in a way that is both peaceful and harmonious, benefiting not only themselves but others as well. and also Buddhism and ecology book, in this book: Right livelihood involves engaging in work that does not harm humans or nature, either physically or morally. By practicing mindfulness in our professions, we can assess whether our work aligns with this principle. In a society where job opportunities may be limited, it can be challenging to find employment that fully embodies right livelihood. However, if our current work causes harm, we should strive to seek alternative employment. Our vocation can either nurture our understanding and compassion or diminish them, making our work integral to our spiritual practice.⁸

Practical steps for cultivating inner peace,

Meditation Engage in daily meditation practices to calm the mind, reduce stress, and increase clarity. Techniques like mindfulness meditation or loving-kindness meditation (Metta) can foster inner peace. (An introduction to Buddhist psychology book), “meditation is most therapeutic when it is not looked upon for therapeutic effect but is put into practice and end in itself.”⁹

Cultivate Gratitude Develop a habit of reflecting on what you are grateful for, which helps shift focus from negative emotions to positive thoughts and promotes peace.

Practice Patience and Tolerance In challenging situations, practice patience and try to understand others’ perspectives. This reduces reactive behaviors and promotes peaceful interactions. Patience is tolerating others and bearing unpleasant experiences such as cold and heat. The buddha say, “bearing the severity of cold, or bearing the severity of heat, thus one has patience. “The buddha goes on to explain patience in various other ways. The underlying quality of patience is placidity in the face of internal or external unpleasant experiences, coupled with fortitude. A man of patience does not allow anyone or anything “to put the grit in the machine” come wind, come foul weather, “he goes about his meritorious routine, not with hedonistic indifference, but with an imperturbable heart, devoid of ill-will. The presence of such a tolerant frame of mind is patience.”¹⁰

Engage in Service Helping others without expecting anything in return can help cultivate a sense of interconnection and reduce the sense of separateness that leads to conflict.

⁸ Martine Batchelor and Kerry Brown (1992) 109.

⁹ Padmashri de silva (2000) 125.

¹⁰ Ven. Ledi sayadaw (2000) 10.

The Buddha taught that peace begins within ourselves. As stated in the Dhammapada,

“Victory breeds hatred, defeat breeds suffering. The wise ones desire neither victory nor defeat... Hatred never ceases through hatred in this world; through love alone does it cease. This is an eternal law.”¹¹

When we consider about cultivating inner peace that radiates outward, Individual Level, Practice mindfulness (*sati*) to understand our own mind, Cultivate the four brahma-viharas, Metta (loving-kindness), *Karunā* (compassion), *Muditā* (sympathetic joy), *Upekkhā* (equanimity), Follow the Noble Eightfold Path. Interpersonal Level, Practice right speech (*Sammā Vacā*), Develop active listening, cultivate understanding and empathy, Practice forgiveness Community Level, Share Buddhist teachings appropriately, support harmonious communities, engage in collective meditation practices, Participate in peace-building activities. And The Buddha taught that peace begins within ourselves.

“Victory breeds hatred, defeat breeds suffering. The wise one’s desire neither victory nor defeat... Happily we live, free from hatred among those who hate.”¹²

Regular meditation practice (*Samatha* and *vipassanā*), Following the Noble Eightfold Path, practicing mindfulness in daily life, Cultivating the four brahma-viharas, Observing the five precepts. And How Inner Peace Affects World Peace? When we’re peaceful, we naturally influence others, reduced personal greed, hatred, and delusion leads to fewer conflicts, Compassionate understanding replaces judgment and prejudice, Mindful actions prevent harm to others. And also Being Peace by Thich Nhat Hanh is a beautiful and concise book that invites readers to explore the power of mindfulness in cultivating peace within oneself and in the world. In this book, Thich Nhat Hanh emphasizes the importance of being fully present and conscious in each moment, fostering inner peace, and practicing compassion toward others.¹³

Buddhism teaches that world peace begins with inner peace. Everyone’s transformation contributes to a collective transformation. When people embody peace through their actions, thoughts, and words, they create an environment where peace can thrive. As the Buddha said, “You, yourselves, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. “By loving ourselves and cultivating inner peace, we create a ripple effect that can lead to a peaceful world.

In essence, the Buddhist approach to world peace emphasizes personal responsibility, compassion, and the understanding that our actions influence not only our own lives but also the world around us. By cultivating inner peace, we are contributing to a more harmonious and peaceful world. In Buddhism,

¹¹ The *Dhammapada* (2007, 2016, 2019) 86, 87.

¹² The *Dhammapada* (2007, 2016, 2019) 86.

¹³ Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh (1987, 2005) 110 - 118.

the concept of “World Peace Through Individual Peace” is deeply rooted in the understanding that the state of the world is shaped by the thoughts, actions, and intentions of individuals. In other words, if individuals cultivate inner peace, that peace can have a ripple effect, leading to greater harmony in the world.

Buddhism teaches that all external conflict, whether between individuals, communities, or nations, originates from internal states of mind, such as ignorance, anger, and greed. These mental afflictions cause individuals to act in harmful ways, leading to suffering and conflict in the world. Conversely, when individuals cultivate qualities such as mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom, they are less likely to engage in harmful behavior, thus contributing to peace in their communities and the world.

The Buddha himself emphasized that peace begins with the mind, and if we want to create a peaceful world, we must first work to establish peace within ourselves. In the Dhammapada one of Buddhism’s central texts, it is said:

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think we become.”

This illustrates the importance of inner peace the way we think and perceive the world ultimately shapes our reality.

“There is no higher happiness than peace.” (Dhp 202) This profound verse comes from the Sukhavagga (Chapter on Happiness) of the Dhammapada. It directly points to the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice - the attainment of inner peace that surpasses all worldly pleasures.

*“santakāyo santavaco -santava susamāhito
Vantalokāmisso bhikkhu-upasanto ti vuccati”¹⁴*

One who is peaceful in mind, peaceful in speech, peaceful indeed, who knows things rightly, who is well composed - such a one is called ‘at peace.’

(Dhp 378) These verses remind us that true peace comes from cultivating tranquility in our thoughts, words and actions. It’s not just about external quiet, but about developing a deep inner stillness through mindfulness and wisdom.

The Buddha explains ten causes of remorse and their opposites that lead to peace of mind, including following ethical precepts and maintaining contentment.¹⁵

1. Killing living beings causes remorse
- Abstaining from killing brings peace of mind
2. Taking what is not given causes remorse
- Abstaining from stealing brings peace of mind
3. Sexual misconduct causes remorse
- Abstaining from sexual misconduct brings peace of mind
4. False speech causes remorse

¹⁴ The Dhammapada (2007, 2016, 2019) 160.

¹⁵ Buddha jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) AN.6.156.

- Abstaining from false speech brings peace of mind
- 5. Divisive speech causes remorse
 - Abstaining from divisive speech brings peace of mind
- 6. Harsh speech causes remorse
 - Abstaining from harsh speech brings peace of mind.
- 7. Idle chatter causes remorse
 - Abstaining from idle chatter brings peace of mind.
- 8. Covetousness causes remorse
 - Freedom from covetousness brings peace of mind.
- 9. Ill will causes remorse
 - Freedom from ill will brings peace of mind.
- 10. Wrong view causes remorse
 - Right view brings peace of mind.

The Buddha explains that a wise person, understanding these causes and their results, abandons the unwholesome actions that lead to remorse and cultivates the wholesome actions that lead to peace of mind. This forms the foundation of ethical conduct (*sīla*) in Buddhist practice.

These ten causes align closely with the ten unwholesome actions (akusala-kamma) and their wholesome counterparts. By following this guidance, one creates conditions for genuine inner peace and progress on the path.

Āghātaṭṭhavinaya sutta¹⁶

The ten methods for removing resentment are:

- i. Considering that the person who harmed you must be unhappy themselves
- ii. Focusing on the good qualities of the person
- iii. Developing compassion towards them
- iv. Not paying attention to that person (setting aside thoughts about them)
- v. Reflecting on karma - that they own their actions
- vi. Contemplating the Buddha's past lives and patience
- vii. Reflecting on the complexity of dependent origination
- viii. Considering how all beings share the same basic wish to be happy
- ix. Reflecting on the benefits of non-resentment
- x. Understanding that beings are owners of their karma

This teaching is particularly practical for daily life as it provides concrete methods to work with difficult emotions and relationships. The sutta emphasizes the importance of mental training and the development of wisdom and compassion as antidotes to anger.

¹⁶ Buddha jayanthi Tipitaka version: *Anguttara Nikaya* (2005) AN.3.302

The *Dvedhavitakka Sutta*¹⁷ presents the Buddha's practical instruction on working with thoughts. He shares his own pre-enlightenment experience of dividing thoughts into two categories:

1. Unwholesome thoughts (based on)

Sensual desire

Ill will

Harm

2. Wholesome thoughts (based on)

Renunciation

Goodwill

Non-harming

The Buddha explains that whatever we frequently think about shapes our mind's inclination. He provides a practical method

1. Recognize the nature of thoughts

2. Understand their consequences

3. Actively cultivate wholesome thoughts

4. Let go of unwholesome ones

He uses the simile of a cowherd who must carefully guard his cows during the rice-growing season but can relax his vigilance after harvest. Similarly, once the mind is well-trained, it naturally tends toward wholesome thoughts. This teaching is especially valuable for meditation practice and daily life, showing how to work skillfully with our thought patterns to develop mental peace.

Shows how to work with different mental states using appropriate attention to develop calm and insight.

The *Vitakkasanthana Sutta*¹⁸ offers five practical methods for dealing with disturbing thoughts and establishing mental peace

i. Replacing unwholesome thoughts with wholesome ones

ii. Contemplating the drawbacks of unwholesome thoughts

iii. Ignoring/ not attending to disturbing thoughts

iv. Gradually calming the thought formation process

v. Using mental determination

Describes eleven benefits of practicing metta (loving-kindness) meditation, including peaceful sleep, mental clarity, and a serene mind.

Buddhism emphasizes compassion (Karuna) and loving-kindness (Metta) as essential qualities for individual peace. Compassion involves the desire to relieve the suffering of others, while loving-kindness involves a universal, unconditional love for all beings. When individuals cultivate these qualities,

¹⁷ Buddha jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) SN.1.288.

¹⁸ Buddha jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) MN.1.300.

they no longer see others as enemies or competitors, but as interconnected beings who deserve love, understanding, and care.

When individuals practice compassion, their actions naturally align with the well-being of others, leading to peaceful interactions and harmony. This is a significant contribution to world peace because when people see each other as interconnected and worthy of care, they are less likely to engage in harmful or violent actions.

Metta meditation- for example, encourages individuals to send thoughts of love and goodwill not just to loved ones but to all beings, regardless of their identity, race, or background. As this practice spreads, it creates an environment where kindness and peace are prioritized, and hatred and aggression are diminished.

The Interconnectedness of All Beings

One of the key Buddhist teachings is dependent origination (*Pratītyasamutpāda*), which asserts that all phenomena arise in dependence upon conditions and are interconnected. This means that all beings are part of a larger whole, and the actions of one individual affect the collective. Thus, when one person cultivates peace within themselves, it ripples out and impacts the world around them.

The understanding of interconnectedness fosters a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others. It highlights the idea that individual happiness and peace cannot be fully realized if others are suffering. In this sense, promoting inner peace isn't just a personal goal but a collective one, because it helps create the conditions for peace in the larger community, society, and world.

The role of ethical conduct (*Sila*)

"A manual of the excellent man" in this book explain (*sila*). There are two kinds of morality; avoidance of the three bodily misdeeds and the four verbal misdeeds (*varitta-sila*); and cultivating virtuous habits (*carittasila*). The latter means paying respect (*apacayana*) to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sargha, and to parents, teachers, and those senior in age, status, or morality; or helping anyone with a meritorious deed as if it were one's own undertaking (*veyyavacca*).¹⁹

In Buddhism, ethical conduct is foundational to both individual peace and peace in the world. The Five Precepts, which guide ethical behavior, include refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication. These precepts provide practical guidelines for living a life that minimizes harm to others and creates a peaceful environment.

When individuals adhere to ethical principles, they reduce the amount of suffering they cause in the world, thereby contributing to collective peace. By being mindful of their actions, they become more responsible members of their communities, helping to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony.

¹⁹ Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (2000) 10.

The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism provides a systematic approach to cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline, all of which contribute to inner peace and, ultimately, world peace. The Eightfold Path consists of Right View Understanding the true nature of reality, including the impermanence of life, the interconnectedness of all beings, and the nature of suffering. Right Intention Cultivating intentions that are aligned with kindness, compassion, and renunciation of harmful desires. Right Speech Speaking truthfully, kindly, and constructively to avoid causing harm through words. Right Action Acting ethically, avoiding actions that harm others. Right Livelihood Choosing a livelihood that does not cause harm or exploitation. Right Effort Cultivating mental states that are wholesome and letting go of harmful ones. Right Mindfulness Practicing mindfulness to be fully aware of one's thoughts, emotions, and actions. Right Concentration: Developing deep mental concentration and insight through meditation.

By following the Noble Eightfold Path, individuals can train their minds, cultivate wisdom and compassion, and avoid actions that contribute to conflict and suffering. The individual's transformation becomes a means of creating peace in the world because each individual is more likely to act in ways that promote peace when they follow the path of ethical conduct and mindfulness.

When we consider about The Buddha's Teachings on Peace

In the *Sutra* of the Four Noble Truths the Buddha explains that the root of all suffering is attachment, craving, and ignorance, while peace can be achieved by eliminating these root causes. The pursuit of inner peace in Buddhist practice involves overcoming mental afflictions, such as desire, hatred, and delusion, and achieving a state of calm, clarity, and wisdom.

The Buddha emphasized that the foundation of a peaceful society depends on the transformation of individuals. When individuals let go of their attachments, delusions, and desires, they no longer fuel conflict, but instead contribute to a peaceful society. A peaceful world begins with peaceful individuals who are aware of the impermanent and interconnected nature of life.

Buddhism categorically advocates refraining from taking of life. There are specific injunctions on both laity and clergy in regard to this in the pali canon. The lay followers are requested to refrain from destruction of *pañña*. It is interested to looking into the meaning of the word *pañña* in this context since it is definitely deeper and wider than what one normally thinks. The injections on clergy on taking of life throw light in arriving at the expected meaning of the *pañña*.

As reported in the numerous suttas the earliest instruction to the members of the sanga regarding taking of life was a monk hold s aloof from the destruction of life. He has laid cudgel and the sword aside, and ashamed of roughness and full of mersy he dwells compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life. during the period when this instruction was valid, neither the code of disciplinary rules nor the distinction between the novices and the

fully ordained monks was known. With the development of the distinction between the novice and the fully ordained monks and the introduction of the disciplinary rules, the injection on taking of life underwent a remarkable change. The precept, "I refrain from taking of life" had been declared valid for the fully ordained monk takes the life of a human knowingly and internationally there is the most serious penalty called *paarajika*, the expulsion from the order. If he takes life and animal there is a less severe penalty called *paacitya* (expiation) under which he can remain in the order after confessing his guilt. This reveals that the word *pañā* in the original injection means both human and animal life. In the case of fully ordained monk, there appears to be a distinction between taking of life of humans and taking of life of animals. Such a concession is not granted for the novices or for the lay followers. The distinction in the case of a fully ordained monk clarifies the position that he can maintain in the order after the offence. By spirit however there is no distinction since the word *pañña* in the original injection recognizes the equality of human and animal life.

Three words that is *pañña*, *bhuuta* and *satta* are utilized in the Pali canon to indicate living beings. A well-known example which carelessly all the three destinations is the *metta sutta* of the *Suttanipata*. In the *Metta*, the living beings are classified into five categories, each category embracing all that have life. The classification in the *metta sutta* is as follows.

1. *tasa-thāvara*
2. *dīgha* (long)
3. *dittha* (that can be seen) *addittha* that cannot be seen
4. *duura* (which live far)
5. *bhuuta* (born) - *sambhavesi* (seeking birth)

In this explain that categories such as human, animal and plant are not merely groups of a single category but are whole in themselves. These life forms can be categorised based on principles size, visibility, proximity, and time. Size refers to how beings can be described as large, small or medium. Visibility divides beings into those that can be seen and those that cannot. Proximity distinguishes beings that are near (*avidura*) from those that are far (*duura*) with no strict boundary between them. Time separates beings into those that existed or exist (*bhuuta*) and those that will exist (*sambhavesi*). The classification changes depending on the principle being applied. Each category represents a whole in itself, the three primary life forms on earth: human, animal and plant can be further divided based on various criteria: size (long, large, medium, short etc.) visibility (whether they can be seen or not) proximity (close or far away) and time (past, present or future). These classifications are based on concepts such as *tasa-thāvara* (living beings that are either in fear or stable like *arahants*) and *bhuuta-sambhavesi* (beings that exist or will exist) "*tassa*" and "*thāvara*" which refers to all living beings in the Pali canon, emphasizing that the noble disciple (*ariya-sāvaka*) refrains from causing harm to any form of life. The idea is that compassion and loving-kindness should extend to all creatures—human, animal and plant. The *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* advises individuals

to live in solitude, avoiding harm to any living being. The passage highlights that the “*tassa – thaavara*” division encompasses a wide variety of life forms and true justice is achieved only when this understanding is applied broadly. The *vaasetta sutta* further elaborates on the diversity of living creature nothing that even plants, insects and animal come in various species.

Fish, bird and humans all of which come in different species. The Buddha distinguishes several major species of living beings, such as trees, grass, insects, four footed animals, reptiles, fish, and birds. The *vasettha sutta* implies that humans are supreme among these creatures though all plants, animal and humsn sure considered life forms (*pañña*). While plant life is acknowledge as less advanced than that of humans and animals, it is still recognized as life within the Buddhist framework.the discussion highlights that the division, traditionally seen as distinguishing between weak and strong life forms, should incled all forms of life-plants, animals and human rather than being based on relative strength.the traditional interpretation of “*tassa-thaavara*” as weak “or” strong” is criticized as overly ambiguous, suggesting that a more inclusive and accurate understanding would treat it as encompassing all living beings.

Buddha’s view on the diversity of living beings, categorizing them into different species, such as trees, grass, insects, animals, reptiles, fish, and birds. It emphasizes the existence of sub-species within these categories and subtly asserts the supremacy of humans among all living creatures, as humans are listed last in the order. The key point here is that plants, like animals and humans, are considered to have life according to Buddhism, although their life is seen as less advanced than that of humans and animals. The passage also critiques traditional interpretations of the term “*tasa-thavara*,” often translated as “feeble” or “weak” and “strong,” suggesting that these translations are vague and inadequate. Instead, the term is better understood as referring to “movable and immovable beings,” a distinction based on the ability to move, which more accurately categorizes life forms into plants, animals, and humans. life can be classified into two categories: moving (*tasa*) and non-moving (*Thāvara*). “Tasa” refers to moving beings, such as humans and animals, while “*thāvara*” refers to non-moving beings, such as plants. However, if some animals are static, they are categorized under *thāvara* as well. This classification focuses on motion, so the most accurate translation of *tasa* would be “moving” and *thāvara* would be “stationary.” The definition of *pāṇa*, then, includes not just humans and animals, but also plants.

Verry important reference the Dhammika Sutta, where the Buddha outlines the conduct for householders, emphasizing the importance of not killing or causing harm to any form of life, whether moving or stationary. This aligns with the Buddhist precept of not taking life, which applies not only to humans and animals but also to plants. Early Buddhism held that both monks and laypeople had a responsibility to care for vegetation, even if specific rules for laypeople regarding plant life were not separately detailed. Buddhism rejects unnecessary destruction of life, including plant life, although it is less strict than Jainism. The Dhammika Sutta discourages intentionally harming

vegetation, as it is considered a form of taking life. Buddhism strongly opposes war due to its inherent harm to all living beings human, animal, and plant. The Buddha forbids both monks and laypeople from participating in warfare, emphasizing that anyone who causes harm to life is an outcast. This aversion to violence extends to animal sacrifice, as illustrated in the *Brahmanadhammika Sutta*, where the slaughter of cows for sacrifice is condemned, and the gods decry the injustice. The Buddha links such violence to the emergence of diseases, as the killing of animals leads to suffering and the proliferation of ailments. The Buddha condemned both the cruelty of animal sacrifice and violence in religious practices, highlighting their harmful impact on humanity. He criticized the killing of innocent animals and the use of violence in rituals, implying that such actions only lead to suffering. If the Buddha was critical of these religious practices, his condemnation would extend to the indiscriminate violence of warfare.

Regarding war, the Buddha viewed it as futile and destructive. He taught that conquest leads to hatred, and both the conqueror and the conquered suffer. In his view, true peace and happiness come from abandoning the pursuit of victory and defeat. Even if one wins a war, it leads to further conflict, as victory contains the seeds of defeat. Therefore, the Buddha advised giving up war entirely, as it serves no purpose other than perpetuating suffering.

The Buddha identified human greed for power, wealth, and sensual pleasure as the root cause of war. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, he explains that wars are fought over desires for sense pleasures, leading to violence and suffering, both in this life and the next. This pursuit of pleasure causes individuals to commit harmful actions, resulting in death, pain, and eventual rebirth in a lower state.

In the *Kalahavivāda sutta*,²⁰ the Buddha further explains that quarrels, arguments, and the resulting insults and grudges stem from attachment to preferences and desires. These preferences arise when people view certain things as pleasant and others as unpleasant. The Buddha asserts that war and conflict are deeply rooted in human nature, and only a transformation of these ingrained qualities can guide humanity away from the destructive path of war.

The Buddha's observations about the destructive nature of human conflict deeply affected Prince Siddhartha, prompting him to renounce his life as a prince and seek a path of peace.

Buddhist perspective on war and violence, particularly as illustrated in the *Attadanda Sutta* and *Mahadukkhakkhandha Sutta*.²¹ In the *Attadanda Sutta*, the Buddha describes his feelings of dismay and fear upon seeing people in conflict, likening them to fish struggling in shallow water. This struggle, driven by craving and attachment (symbolized as a dart), is the root cause of violence and war. Buddhism holds that there is no such thing as a "just war," as all wars are inherently unjust due to the violence they involve. The Buddha also rejects

²⁰ Buddha jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) *Sutta nipata* 272.

²¹ Buddha jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) *MN.1.200*.

the idea that a soldier dying in battle for their country, race, or religion will be rewarded in heaven, describing such beliefs as misguided. When a fighting-man asks the Buddha about this, the Buddha explains that a warrior's actions in battle stem from harmful, violent intentions, and their desire to cause suffering is the basis for their karma. The Buddha teaches that soldiers who die in battle or those who believe they will go to heaven after death due to their actions in war will instead face rebirth in hell, as their views are considered perverted (*micchāditthi*). This reflects Buddhism's strong stance against war. Buddhist monks are also instructed to avoid engaging in discussions about armies, battles, or violence, as such topics are deemed inappropriate and inferior. Instead, monks are encouraged to focus on higher, spiritual topics such as contentment, seclusion, virtue, concentration, and liberation.

In Buddhism, peace and unity are highly valued, and disunity is strongly condemned. The Buddha teaches that those who work together in harmony, like milk and water blending, will prosper, while those who engage in quarrels and division will suffer. He emphasizes the importance of being a peacemaker, encouraging unity and affection among people. The Buddha describes six key practices to maintain harmony: friendly actions of body, speech, and mind; sharing acquisitions; living united in virtues; and having a noble view.

The Buddha also addresses the consequences of division within the monastic community, as seen in the conflict among the monks of Kosambi. In such cases, he encourages forbearance and reconciliation, even using a story about King Dighāvu's forgiveness of his enemies to demonstrate the power of gentleness and love. Despite his efforts to reconcile the monks, the Buddha faces failure and eventually retreats to the forest for peace, reflecting on the comfort of solitude away from divisive strife.

When we consider about four noble path, The Four Noble Truths provide a profound framework for cultivating inner peace, which naturally extends to world peace. Let me explain this connection,

1. First Noble Truth (*Dukkha*)

Recognizing that conflict, war, and social unrest are manifestations of suffering.

Understanding that outer conflicts stem from inner turmoil

Acknowledging that world peace begins with understanding our own suffering.

2. Second Noble Truth (*Samudaya*)

Identifying that greed, hatred, and delusion are root causes of both personal and global conflicts.

Recognizing how our own mental states contribute to collective tension.

Understanding how attachment to views and opinions creates division.

3. Third Noble Truth (*Nirodha*)

Realizing that peace is possible through cessation of causes of suffering.

Understanding that inner transformation leads to outer change.

As the Buddha said in the Dhammapada,

“Hatred never ceases through hatred in this world; through love alone does it cease. This is an eternal law.”²²

4. Fourth Noble Truth (*Magga*)

Practical steps for cultivating inner peace:

Right View: Understanding interconnectedness.

Right Intention: Cultivating thoughts of loving-kindness

Right Speech: Using words that promote harmony.

Right Action: Acting with compassion.

Right Livelihood: Living ethically.

Right Effort: Working consistently for peace.

Right Mindfulness: Being aware of our impact.

Right Concentration: Developing mental stability.

The Buddha emphasized this connection in the *Sedaka Sutta*²³

“By protecting oneself, one protects others. By protecting others, one protects oneself.”

cultivate world peace,

1. Start with daily meditation practice

2. Develop metta (loving-kindness) towards all beings

3. Practice mindful communication

4. Engage in compassionate action

5. Share understanding of Dharma with others, we can learn How to help mediation world peace

And also, when we consider about practically how to do this, example meditation, mediation how to help cultivate inner peace for world peace practical meditation guide to cultivate inner peace that contributes to world peace:

1. Basic Meditation Setup- Find quiet space, sit comfortably, spine straight, Eyes gently closed or half-open, set intention for world peace, Peace Cultivation Meditation (20-30 minutes)-Stabilizing Mind (5 minutes) Focus on breath, Note “breathing in peace, breathing out tension, Establish calm mind as foundation2- Inner Peace Practice (10 minutes) Step 3- Radiating Peace (10 minutes)

As Buddha taught in *Vatthupama Sutta*²⁴

“When the mind is purified, joy arises. From joy comes peace.”

Scan body for tension.

Release physical stress.

²² The Dhammapada (2007, 2016, 2019) 5.

²³ Buddha Jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) SN.5-1/302.

²⁴ Buddha Jayanthi Tipitaka version: (2005) MN.1.82.

Feel peace in your heart center.

Let peace fill your entire being.

Following Karaniya Metta Sutta:

“Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.”

Visualize peace as bright light.

Radiate from heart center.

Expand to your immediate surroundings, your community, your country, the entire world

As stated in *Dhammapada*:

“Better than a thousand hollow words is one word that brings peace.”²⁵

Once we understand the value of inner peace, we can recognize its essential role in our lives. When we reflect on the roots of war and conflict, it becomes clear that peace is not just an external goal—it’s a reflection of our inner state. True world peace begins with cultivating peace within ourselves. Without inner harmony, it’s impossible to navigate the chaos around us or contribute to lasting change in the world. Inner peace isn’t just a personal journey; it’s the foundation of global peace.

The effects of a world war - whether past or hypothetical - are devastating and wide-ranging, impacting nearly every aspect of global society. Historically, the effects of World War I and World War II included the loss of millions of lives, with soldiers and civilians alike suffering through direct conflict, bombings, and genocide. Economies were crippled, with countries facing massive debt, destruction of infrastructure, and the loss of productive labor. Post-war reconstruction often took decades, with countries like Germany and Japan only fully recovering after significant aid and rebuilding efforts.

Politically, world wars often lead to shifts in power, with new global superpowers emerging and former empires collapsing. The map of the world is often redrawn, as was the case with the dismantling of colonial empires and the establishment of new borders. The creation of the United Nations after WWII, for example, was an attempt to prevent future conflicts on such a massive scale.

Socially, the aftermath of world wars also brings about deep psychological scars, trauma, and societal changes. Family structures, cultural identities, and global attitudes can shift dramatically. The long-term effects include the displacement of millions of people, the rise of refugee crises, and the challenge of reintegrating veterans into civilian life.

Environmental consequences are also significant, as wars cause massive destruction to ecosystems, with land and natural resources being exploited or ruined by military activity, leaving long-lasting environmental damage. Economically, the effects of a world war are profound and often long-lasting.

²⁵ The Dhammapada (2007, 2016, 2019) 46.

During a major conflict, economies are typically redirected toward war production, which can cause disruptions in civilian industries and consumer markets. Resources such as labor, raw materials, and capital are heavily focused on military needs, which often leads to shortages in basic goods and services for the general population.

In the aftermath, countries experience significant economic damage. Infrastructure—roads, bridges, factories, and transportation networks—are often destroyed, which leads to a dramatic slowdown in economic activity. Rebuilding these systems can take years or even decades, requiring enormous financial resources and international aid. For instance, post-World War II reconstruction required large-scale investments in Europe and Japan, with the Marshall Plan providing financial assistance to help revive the European economy.

Additionally, the massive government spending on war efforts usually leads to high levels of debt. Many countries borrow heavily to fund military operations, and after the conflict ends, they are left to deal with the long-term burden of repaying these debts, which can stifle growth for years. Inflation may also occur due to the printing of money to finance the war effort.

On the positive side, war can also spur technological innovation and industrial growth, as new technologies are developed for military purposes. In some cases, such as during WWII, economies may experience a temporary boost in certain sectors (e.g., manufacturing and defense industries) due to increased demand for wartime goods.

However, the long-term economic consequences are often negative. Widespread poverty, unemployment, and social instability can persist in war-torn countries, while the global economy can face slowdowns due to disrupted trade routes, loss of productivity, and a decrease in consumer confidence. Economic recovery is slow and challenging, and the costs of war tend to ripple across generations. We have gained profound insights into the history of world wars, and through this understanding, we have all borne witness to their far-reaching consequences. The Vietnam War, for instance, serves as a poignant reminder of the heroes who emerged from the depths of conflict. Beyond their acts of bravery, what becomes truly striking is how some individuals managed to embody the essence of inner peace amidst the chaos and destruction. This exemplifies how deeply inner peace can be embedded in a person's life, even in the most turbulent of times.

In a setting dominated by violence and aggression, it may seem almost inconceivable for inner peace to endure. However, certain individuals—whether soldiers, leaders, or ordinary civilians—found ways to safeguard their inner tranquility. This demonstrates that peace is not a mere abstract notion, but rather a skill that can be cultivated, even in the midst of the most trying circumstances. These examples highlight the profound power of inner peace, not only in surviving extreme adversity but also in fostering a more profound comprehension of the world and the inherent nature of conflict. This reflection underscores that inner peace is not a mere luxury, but an indispensable tool, enabling individuals to navigate even the most chaotic and

challenging situations. In doing so, it contributes to a deeper, more meaningful understanding of peace on a global scale.

The war led to devastating human losses. Approximately 58,000 Americans lost their lives, and estimates suggest between 2 to 3 million Vietnamese died, with the vast majority being civilians. Millions more were wounded or left with long-lasting psychological trauma. War Crimes and Massacres: As mentioned earlier, the My Lai Massacre highlighted the brutal conduct of some U.S. troops. This and other atrocities committed during the war damaged the reputation of the U.S. military and intensified opposition to the war. Environmental Damage: Defoliants, one of the most controversial aspects of the Vietnam War was the use of chemical agents like Agent Orange. The U.S. military sprayed millions of gallons of herbicides to deforest areas where North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters might be hiding. These chemicals led to long-term environmental damage, causing widespread deforestation, soil degradation, and water contamination. It also resulted in health problems for both Vietnamese civilians and U.S. veterans, including birth defects, cancers, and other diseases. In Vietnam: Vietnam's post-war recovery was long and painful. The country faced widespread poverty, destruction of infrastructure, and the effects of chemical defoliants. The war also created a refugee crisis, with millions fleeing the country, particularly after the fall of Saigon, leading to the displacement of large populations. Economic Struggles and Reunification:

The communist government in the North faced challenges in rebuilding a devastated country, and South Vietnam's economy, once thriving under American aid, was left in ruins. The region also faced political instability under a one-party state system. Global and Regional Impact:

Cold War Dynamics: The Vietnam War became a symbol of the Cold War struggle, influencing U.S. policy in other regions. For example, the U.S. took a more cautious approach in future interventions, especially in the context of the "Vietnam Syndrome" (a reluctance to engage in military conflicts due to the trauma of the war)

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist, and teacher, is one of the most influential figures in promoting mindfulness, inner peace, and reconciliation. His teachings, particularly in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, have had a profound impact on people around the world, including Americans. He advocated for cultivating peace within oneself as a means of fostering broader societal peace, which is particularly resonant when considering the wounds caused by the Vietnam War and its aftermath. Thich Nhat Hanh's Message of Peace for Americans:

Thich Nhat Hanh's counsel to Americans, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, was deeply rooted in his belief that peace must begin within. He encouraged people, both in the U.S. and Vietnam, to practice mindfulness, compassion, and understanding to heal from the wounds of war. Here are some of his key teachings and insights that aimed at fostering inner peace and healing, especially for Americans: Mindfulness and Present Moment Awareness: Mindfulness is at the core of Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings. He often reminded

people that true peace cannot be found by dwelling in the past or worrying about the future. Instead, it can only be experienced in the present moment. For Americans, particularly those affected by the trauma of the Vietnam War (veterans and civilians alike), mindfulness provides a tool to heal from the emotional scars of war. By focusing on the present and becoming aware of one's thoughts and feelings, individuals can let go of anger, regret, and fear.

"Mindfulness is the energy that helps us recognize the conditions of happiness that are already present in our lives."

This idea of recognizing the present moment as an opportunity for peace was particularly important for Americans who were grappling with the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Many veterans and civilians struggled with trauma, anger, and grief, and mindfulness became a means to understand and release these feelings. Interbeing and Compassion:

Thich Nhat Hanh introduced the concept of "interbeing," which suggests that everything in the world is interconnected. He taught that if we harm others, we are ultimately harming ourselves. Understanding this interconnectedness leads to compassion and empathy, both for oneself and for others. His teachings were aimed at helping Americans—many of whom had been involved in or affected by the Vietnam War—realize the importance of reconciliation, both on a personal and global level. In his book *Being Peace*, Thich Nhat Hanh wrote²⁶

"If we are not at peace with ourselves, we cannot bring peace to others."

This wisdom is particularly relevant when considering the deep divisions in the U.S. during the war years, as well as the long-lasting effects of the war on American society. For Thich Nhat Hanh, inner peace was essential for any real effort to bring peace to others, whether it was fellow citizens, war-torn Vietnam, or the world at large. Reconciliation and Forgiveness: Thich Nhat Hanh became a symbol of reconciliation after the Vietnam War. Despite his strong opposition to the war, he did not advocate for hatred or revenge. Instead, he urged both Americans and Vietnamese to practice forgiveness and work toward healing. In 1966, during the war, Thich Nhat Hanh famously visited the United States and spoke about the need for reconciliation between the U.S. and Vietnam. His message was clear: peace cannot be achieved without understanding and forgiveness.

He wrote, "When you plant a seed of peace, you may not see the flower. But the seed will be there, and in the future, the flower will bloom." This metaphor illustrates his belief that the efforts of peace and healing, whether through individual mindfulness or larger social change, will bear fruit in time, even if that outcome is not immediately visible. His wisdom on forgiveness and reconciliation resonated with those who were dealing with the emotional aftermath of the war, both in the U.S. and in Vietnam. Living Simply and with Gratitude.

²⁶ Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh (1987) 85 – 90.

Thich Nhat Hanh also taught the importance of simplicity and gratitude. For Americans struggling with the excesses of modern life, mindfulness practices that focus on gratitude for small blessings—such as a breath, a meal, or a simple walk in nature—offered a way to reconnect with the present moment and achieve peace. Living simply and being grateful were central to his teachings, especially when dealing with trauma. He believed that by simplifying one's life and cultivating appreciation for the present moment, inner peace could be nurtured.

Peace as a Collective Effort, For Thich Nhat Hanh, the effort to create peace was not just an individual one but a collective one. He spoke out against the war and encouraged activism, but his activism was always grounded in nonviolence, mindfulness, and love. His involvement in the peace movement during the Vietnam War was significant, but he also offered Americans an alternative to the divisive and often violent forms of protest that emerged during that period. His message emphasized that peace is not just about the absence of war, but about living harmoniously, respecting one another, and cultivating compassion.

He advocated for engaged Buddhism, which combines the cultivation of personal peace through mindfulness with active efforts to address social and political issues through compassion and nonviolent action. Thich Nhat Hanh's *Legacy of Inner Peace in America*. Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings had a lasting impact on the American public, particularly in the context of healing the wounds of the Vietnam War. His advocacy for mindfulness, compassion, and reconciliation resonated not only with war veterans but also with the broader American society as they grappled with the societal divisions caused by the conflict. He became a widely respected figure in the U. S., and his work to promote peace and healing transcended national boundaries. Thich Nhat Hanh's message continues to inspire people across the world, particularly through practices of meditation and mindfulness, which have become integral parts of modern wellness culture in America. Peace is every step in this book include, The passage highlights the profound suffering of the Earth, likening it to a body enduring war, oppression, famine, and environmental degradation. It emphasizes that while many are aware of these issues and act with compassion, true strength to sustain such efforts comes from deep, inner peace. By practicing mindfulness and meditation, individuals can cultivate this peace, enabling them to be effective instruments of change in addressing social and environmental injustices. The text also notes that people from various backgrounds, united by inner peace, contribute to causes like social justice, environmental protection, and the promotion of love and understanding worldwide.²⁷

And also, we know about Ven Thich Quang Duc,

Thich Quang Duc was a Vietnamese Buddhist monk who became globally known for his act of self-immolation in 1963, which was deeply connected to the political and religious turmoil in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. His special involvement with the war was rooted in his protest the

²⁷ Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh (1995) 118 – 119.

religious persecution of Buddhists by the South Vietnamese government, led by President Ngo Dinh Diem, who was a Catholic and had implemented policies that marginalized the Buddhist majority. Thich Quang Duc's act of self-immolation on June 11, 1963, in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) was a direct response to the severe discrimination against Buddhists under the Diem regime. The government had restricted Buddhist religious practices, destroyed Buddhist temples, and used violent methods to suppress Buddhist protests. The immediate cause of his protest was the government's violent crackdown on Buddhist monks and civilians after they had protested against the Diem government's preferential treatment of Catholics. Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation was not a random act but a deeply symbolic and peaceful form of protest, inspired by Buddhist principles of nonviolence and compassion. He set himself on fire in the middle of a busy intersection in Saigon while meditating in the lotus position, symbolizing the depth of his commitment to the cause and his desire to draw attention to the injustice faced by Buddhists. Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation shocked the world and drew significant international attention to the political and religious tensions in Vietnam. His protest was widely covered in global media, especially in the West, and it galvanized the Buddhist community in Vietnam. Following his death, the Buddhist crisis intensified, and monks across the country held similar protests, while protests also spread to other parts of the world, especially among the Vietnamese diasporas. This event significantly weakened the Diem regime, which faced mounting pressure both domestically and internationally. The Buddhist protests were instrumental in undermining Diem's government, and within months, Diem was overthrown and assassinated in a coup. Thich Quang Duc's martyrdom played a major role in changing the political landscape of South Vietnam, contributing to the eventual escalation of the war and U.S. involvement. Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation became a symbol of resistance against oppression and the unjust use of power. His sacrifice also highlighted the deep divisions within Vietnamese society during the war, particularly the sectarian conflicts between the Buddhist majority and the Catholic government. Thich Quang Duc's protest remains one of the most powerful examples of nonviolent resistance in modern history. His image of a monk sitting in lotus position, calmly meditating while engulfed in flames became iconic, and it continues to be remembered as a powerful statement against political and religious repression. Thich Quang Duc's involvement in the Vietnam War, although not a direct military participant, was pivotal in the struggle for religious freedom and justice during a time of intense conflict. His self-immolation was a profound and tragic act of protest against the political and religious oppression of the South Vietnamese government, which had led to widespread suffering among Buddhists. His protest had significant political consequences, helping to destabilize the Diem regime and bringing global attention to the religious conflict. Thich Quang Duc's legacy endures as a symbol of courage, self-sacrifice, and the power of nonviolent resistance, which continues to inspire peace movements and social justice advocates worldwide.

When we look toward the future, it becomes apparent that the possibility of another world war remains. If individuals fail to cultivate peace within themselves, if they do not nurture inner harmony, how can the world possibly be prepared for it? True peace resides within, and it is only through embracing inner peace that we can truly understand what can be gained from it—human rights, for instance, are a direct manifestation of peace. The question arises: Could the outbreak of a third world war be the result of individual actions and behaviors that fail to prioritize peace and cooperation?

This reflection emphasizes the crucial link between personal peace and global stability. When we fail to nurture peace within ourselves, the larger world struggles to find harmony as well. It's a reminder that personal actions, driven by conflict or aggression, can ripple out and contribute to larger global issues. The practice of inner peace, however, can counteract this by encouraging empathy, respect for human rights, and a broader sense of interconnectedness.

As we consider the possibility of global conflict, it's essential to focus on fostering peace within ourselves and our communities. It is through this collective commitment to inner peace that we can avoid future turmoil and work toward a more harmonious world. How do you see the role of individual responsibility in maintaining global peace?

The idea of a third world war has been a subject of concern and speculation for many years, especially as global conflicts, tensions between powerful nations, and regional disputes continue to evolve. While it is impossible to predict the future, various experts and geopolitical analysts have discussed the potential causes and risks of a large-scale war. Factors That Could Lead to a Third World War,

Rising Geopolitical Tensions—Major world powers like the United States, China, and Russia are engaged in a number of competitive and adversarial relationships. These include territorial disputes in the South China Sea, competition for influence in regions like Africa, and conflicts over military bases and alliances (e.g., NATO and its expansion). Many analysts suggest that a miscalculation or an escalation of one of these tensions could result in a larger, more destructive conflict. **China vs. U.S. and Allies:** A significant concern revolves around the growing rivalry between the U.S. and China, particularly over Taiwan, the South China Sea, and technological dominance. China's military expansion and its assertive stance in the Indo-Pacific have raised alarms. According to experts like Dr. John Mearsheimer, professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, the possibility of a direct conflict over Taiwan could escalate into a broader global conflict involving the U.S. and its allies. Russia and NATO, the ongoing war in Ukraine, with Russia's invasion in 2022, has heightened tensions between Russia and NATO, which includes the U.S. and several European countries. NATO's support for Ukraine and Russia's demand for NATO to scale back its presence in Eastern Europe have created a dangerous standoff, reminiscent of Cold War tensions. The fear is that further escalation, including the use of nuclear weapons, could draw multiple nations into a wider conflict. **Nuclear Proliferation:** One of

the main reasons that a third world war is often discussed in terms of nuclear conflict is the presence of nuclear weapons. Countries like the U.S., Russia, China, and India have large nuclear arsenals, and tensions involving these nations could lead to devastating consequences. The concept of “mutually assured destruction” (MAD) has historically prevented large-scale nuclear conflict, but some experts warn that the risk of miscommunication, accidents, or rogue actions remains high. Economic Competition and Resource Wars: Global economic instability, spurred by competition for resources such as oil, water, and minerals, can also increase the risk of conflict. The geopolitical struggle over resources, especially in regions like the Arctic, Africa, and the Middle East, could lead to tensions escalating into full-scale wars. Cyber Warfare and Technology- Another significant and modern factor is cyber warfare. Nations are increasingly targeting each other’s infrastructure through cyberattacks, which could potentially cripple economies or military systems. An escalation in this domain could trigger military responses, particularly if vital infrastructure or civilian systems are disrupted. Regional Conflicts and Proxy Wars: Regional conflicts involving proxy wars, such as in Syria, Yemen, and the ongoing tensions in the Korean Peninsula, have the potential to spill over into larger confrontations. Proxy wars have already been seen in places like Ukraine, where Western powers support Ukraine, and Russia supports separatist factions, with the broader risk of these regional conflicts involving greater international involvement. Though the risk of a third world war remains a serious concern, the balance of power, diplomacy, and international cooperation plays a critical role in preventing such a conflict. Some analysts, such as Harvard professor Graham Allison, warn of the Thucydides Trap, where a rising power (like China) challenges an established power (the U.S.), creating the potential for war. However, global efforts continue to focus on diplomacy and conflict management to avoid such an outcome. The situation remains fluid, and keeping a close watch on developments in global geopolitics is crucial. Understanding these complexities, both historical and contemporary, helps provide perspective on the path forward.

III. CONCLUSION

Every person holds their life. The most valuable possession they have is their own life. Just as we should cherish our own lives, we must also consider the lives of others with the same respect. Just as we are entitled to feelings, experiences, and well-being, so too should these be granted to all beings. It is not only humans but also animals and the environment that deserve our love and compassion. To embody this love, we must first cultivate peace within ourselves. Without inner peace, we cannot experience peace in society. The peace we seek in the world must begin from within, as it is impossible to witness true peace in the world without first nurturing it inside.

We live in a world where multiple nations and cultures coexist. These diverse peoples, like ourselves, are individuals who love life. The value of a person is not determined by their skin color or appearance, but by the beauty of the heart they carry within. Disputes and conflicts arise when we lose control over our

thoughts and emotions. The teachings of the Buddha offer a way to heal not just ourselves but the entire world. Numerous suttas, such as the Atthadana Sutta, Mahadukkha Sutta, Vatthupama Sutta, Sedaka Sutta, Kalaha-Vivada Sutta, Satipatthana Sutta, and Karaniya Sutta, provide clear guidance on how peace can be nurtured within ourselves and in our communities. The Dhamma offers teachings on peace, and many Gathas related to peace emphasize the importance of individual inner peace in creating societal harmony.

When reflecting on the horrors of war and its consequences, we must turn our attention to historical examples such as the Vietnam War and the American involvement in it. During this time, two notable monks, Thich Nhat Hanh and Thich Quang Duc, demonstrated the power of inner peace in the face of extreme adversity. Thich Nhat Hanh, through his writings like *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, *Being Peace*, and *The Art of Power*, has consistently advocated for peace, mindfulness, and compassion as the foundation for healing both individual and collective wounds. His teachings, along with the courageous self-sacrifice of Thich Quang Duc, offer us an enduring lesson in the power of inner peace and its potential to transform not just individuals but entire societies.

These monks' actions and teachings demonstrate the profound impact of inner peace on social and global well-being. The model they set is invaluable and timeless. As the world stands on the precipice of potential conflicts, such as a third world war, we must recognize that the roots of these conflicts often lie in unresolved personal and collective turmoil. By following the example of these great peace advocates and cultivating inner peace, we can prevent the escalation of hatred and violence that leads to war.

In a society where hate speech and division can easily destroy the fabric of peace, the teachings of the Buddha offer an antidote. His disciples, who spread peace in the face of adversity, exemplify the true power of love and compassion. As followers of the Buddha's teachings, it is our responsibility to nurture inner peace and share it with the world, becoming ambassadors of peace in a world in dire need of healing.

Before the potential of a third world war manifests, we can see the signs of its causes in the world today. As practitioners of the Buddha's teachings, we have the power to turn the tide of conflict by cultivating peace within ourselves and sharing it with others. This is not just an individual practice; it is a profound model for society. By nurturing inner peace, we set an example for future generations, contributing to a more harmonious world. As we continue to grow in our understanding and practice of peace, we become not only better individuals but also a better collective society, inspiring others to follow the path of peace.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Ms. Sanghmitra Gautam*

Abstract:

This dissertation presentation an extensive ethnobotanical and pharmacognostic study of traditional medicinal plants used by the tribal communities of the Koraput district in Odisha, India. Through field surveys and interviews with local healers, 154 plant species across 130 genera and 72 families were documented. Emphasis was placed on their traditional applications, plant parts used, methods of preparation, and pharmacological significance. Among them, 10 plants with high therapeutic value were selected for detailed phytochemical screening, fluorescence analysis, and histological studies to identify active constituents. Additionally, the antioxidant activities of selected plant extracts were assessed using DPPH assay. The findings validate the rich ethnomedical knowledge of the region and highlight the pharmacological potential of several species for future drug development. This research not only reinforces the importance of conserving indigenous knowledge but also provides a scientific basis for the rational use of medicinal plants in traditional healthcare systems.

Keywords: *Ethnobotany, pharmacognosy, traditional medicine, medicinal plants, tribal knowledge, phytochemical screening, fluorescence analysis.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Inner peace is a state of tranquility. Inner peace means emotional, mental, and spiritual stability. It's a state of harmony within yourself and the things and situations around you without expectations, judgment, and resistance. It is a state of mental, emotional, and spiritual ease. As stated in *Dhammapada*, "All experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind."¹ As stated in the *Dhammapada*: "Speak or act with a peaceful mind we can achieve inner serenity and well-being". Peace can be achieved from interior self-transformation,

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¹ *Dhammapada*, Yamaka Vaggo 1.

that is, transcending the fixed ego-self and cultivating compassion. Inner peace includes self-awareness, a calm mind, wise intellect, positive emotions, a healthy body, and a kind heart, which helps in attaining harmony not just within multiple selves but across the globe. When we talk of World peace, it implies a state of global harmony between nations, a world without violence. A World where nations work together to uplift each other.

1.1. The relationship between inner peace and global harmony

Inner peace and global harmony are connected because only a calm mind can contribute to a more harmonious world. Civilizations or governments that place a high value on finding inner peace are more likely to place a higher priority on global harmony, which ultimately results in a society or a world that is more stable and peaceful.

1.2. The role of Buddhism in cultivating inner peace

Naththi ragasamo aggi naththi dosasamo kali ²

Naththi khandasama dukkha naththi santiparam sukam

There is no fire like attachment, no impurity like hatred, no sorrow like the five aggregates, there is no happiness greater than *Nibbana*.

Inner peace can be achieved through the teachings and principles of Buddha. Buddha's teachings and principles are focused cultivation of mind and body that is nama rupa (combination of five aggregates). Mindfulness of mind and body leads to inner peace. Mindfulness is awareness of mind and body and feelings or sensations.

Yo ca buddhaca dhammaca sanghaca saranam gato ³

Catari ariyasaccani sammappanyaya passat

Dukkham dukhasamutpadam dukkhassa ca atikammam ⁴

Ariyacanatthangikam maggam dukkhupasmagaminam

Etam kho saranam khemam etam saranuttamam

Etam saranmagama sabbadukkha pamuccati

The one who has refuge in the elderly, dharma, and sangha, who has seen with perfect wisdom the four noble truths- suffering, the origin of suffering, liberation from suffering, and the noble eightfold path leading to liberation, this is the auspicious refuge. This is the best refuge. By attaining this refuge, a person becomes free from all suffering.

Buddha gave the concept of the middle path, which is following the noble eightfold path. The Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism is a set of practices that lead to the end of suffering & bring peace and harmony within the individual and in the world. Noble Eightfold Path: Right Understanding, Right Intent, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness,

² *Dhammapada*, Sukha vaggo 202.

³ *Dhammapada*, Buddhavaggo 190.

⁴ *Dhammapada*, Buddhavaggo 191,192.

and Right Concentration. Right Understanding shows us what life really is and what life's problems are composed of. Right Intent helps us to decide what our heart wants. Right speech involves recognition of the truth. Right Action recognizes the need to take the ethical approach in life, to consider others and the world we live in. Right Livelihood. If your work has a lack of respect for life, then it will be a barrier to progress on the spiritual path. Buddhism promotes the principle of equality of all living beings and respect for all life. Right Effort means cultivating enthusiasm, a positive attitude in a balanced way. Right Mindfulness means being aware of the moment and being focused in that moment. Right Concentration is turning the mind to focus on an object or a concept such as compassion & harmony.

The benefits of Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are significant as they teach the mind to see things not as we are conditioned to seeing them but as they really are. At the same time, they also lead to a feeling of calm and peace with the world.

II. MAJOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES SUCH AS CONFLICT, VIOLENCE, AND DIVISION THAT HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR PEACE AT ALL LEVELS.

Yo Sahasam Sahasena sangame manuse jine⁵

Ekam ca jeyyamatttanam sav e sangamajuttamo

2.1. The one who conquers himself is the best winner of the battle than the one who defeats thousands of people

Global armed Conflicts:

The world has seen many global armed conflicts like World War I, World War II, Ukraine-Russia war, the Myanmar civil war, the Haiti gang violence, the Israeli-Syrian border conflict, Turkey-Rojava conflict. Millions of people have lost their lives in these conflicts & many are still losing their loved ones.

Political conflicts:

The world is run by 4 types of politics: democracy, authoritarianism, totalitarian, monarchy, and hybrid.

Political conflict is a systematic struggle within societies or political parties involving clashes of interests, power dynamics, and differing approaches, often leading to a new social structure for society and, on a broader level, for the world.

The lesser involvement of citizens can lead to more conflicts within the society or nation or world due to not agreeing on any cordial terms for the benefits of the world.

Nationalism conflicts:

Nationalism conflicts are the differences of beliefs within the nationalist, and it can be domestic or international.

⁵ *Dhammapada*, Sahssavaggo 103.

Japan-China: Japanese leaders' visit to the Yasukuni Shrine had created nationalist conflicts between China and Korea

Religious conflicts:

Religious conflict means disagreement with religious groups or within a religious community.

2.2. Need for Buddhist teaching to overcome these conflicts

*Na hi verena verani sammanteedh kudachanam,⁶
averena ca sammanti eso dhammo sanantano.*

Never can hatred by enmity at any one time be appeased be, it is appeased with amity. This is the law from eternity.

"Rare is Bertha as a human being.

Hard is the life of mortals.

"Do not let this opportunity slip. "DHAMMAPADA"

To overcome these conflicts, we need to follow the concept of Brahmavihara (The sublime states), and these four sublime virtues are Metta, Karuna, Mudita, and Upekkha.

These sublime virtues are also known as appamanna. Brahmavihara focuses on equanimity between all beings.

*Mettavihari yo bhikkhu passano buddhasasane⁷
Adhigacche padam santam sankharupasamam sukam*

The monk who lives with friendship and is happy with the Buddha's teachings, achieves the state that quenches all the sanskaras and is blessed.

2.2.1. Metta (Loving Kindness)

A Loving attitude is the main attribute of metta.

One who practices metta thinks about the welfare of others. He sees beauty and goodness in others.

Metta is a state of true friendship. It is genuine happiness toward all living beings.

Metta is not mere universal brotherhood, for it embraces all living beings, including animals.

Metta is not political brotherhood or racial brotherhood or national brotherhood.

Political brotherhood is limited to those who have similar political views.

Racial brotherhood and national brotherhood are restricted only to those who have the same race and nation.

Metta helps reduce conflicts and promoting harmony.

Metta creates global citizenship where every individual works towards

⁶ Dhammapada, Yamakv vaggo 5

⁷ Dhammapada, Bhikku vaggo 368.

making a peaceful environment.

Metta breaks down barriers among people and fosters a connectivity amongst them.

Buddha states:

“Hatreds do not cease through hatreds: through love alone they cease.”

2.2.2. Karuna (Compassion)

The main attribute of karuna is to remove the suffering of others.

Karuna helps in resolving conflicts and finding mutually beneficial solutions.

Karuna helps individuals to share national, cultural and religious boundaries.

Karuna helps in promoting equality, social justice and advocates the human rights.

Karuna helps in healing and reconciliation.

2.2.3. Mudita (Appreciative Joy)

It cultivates gratitude and appreciation for others. It fosters a sense of unity and a sense of happiness. It overcomes jealousy, envy, anger, and hatred. Mudita helps in personal growth as an individual, and it creates a more positive mindset.

2.2.4. Uppekha (Equanimity)

Uppekha helps a person remain calm and composed in any situation. It facilitates peaceful communication and helps in listening to others actively and thoughtfully. It promotes a culture of tolerance, understanding, and respect. It promotes self-reflection through our emotions, actions and self-awareness. It fosters global understanding to promote diverse cultures and perspectives.⁸

Mano pubbangma dhamma manosettha manomaya.⁹

manasa che padutthena bhasati va karoti va,

tato, na dukkhamanveti cakka va vahato padam.

(The mind is the leader of mental states; mind is supreme mind creates, if with a mind that is not clean one does speak or does anything as wheels behind oxen feet do go).

Meditation: Buddha's entire teachings are based on meditation . There are many forms of meditation. The aim of practicing meditation is to gain a concentrated mind. Practicing meditation, we can develop our mind and body. Buddha himself discovered the path of meditation which is the middle path. Buddha used his meditation technique to find the truth of life that is life is suffering. There is a reason for suffering. Cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Which is an eight-fold path.

⁸ The Buddha and his teachings: NARADA (1988).

⁹ Dhammapada, Yamak vaggo 1.

III. FORMS OF MEDITATION:

3.1. *Samatha Bhavana*: Concentration meditation.

Samatha means concentration, calmness, peacefulness. And *bhavana* means development. So *Samatha bhavana* is the development of concentration of mind. When the mind is highly concentrated by practicing meditation, the mind becomes free from hatred, violence, restlessness. It inculcates qualities like awareness, love, kindness, confidence, energy.

3.2. *Vipassana bhavana*:

In *Pali* *vi* means diversity and *passana* means to observe. So *vipassana* means to observe things thoroughly, to investigate diversity. Here things mean all living and nonliving things we see all around us. Everything that we see with our eyes we believe we think exists but in reality what we already know by our conventional knowledge. But when an *ARIYA* (who is well trained in *vipassana* meditation like Buddha) sees things as physical aggregates (*rupa skandha*) and mental aggregates (*nama skandha*) together he sees it differently than us. Why we see differently than *Ariya* because *Avijja* (ignorance) covers our eyes which prevents us from looking through things as they truly are. *Ariya* by practicing meditation removes the *Lobha*, *Dwesha*, *moha*. *Ariya* can see things with their wisdom of knowledge. *Ariya* sees that our body is made up of *nama* and *rupa*. He also sees it as impermanent and our body is full of suffering and that is there is no way to escape suffering only by practicing *vipassana* we can remove our suffering.

3.3. *Metta bhavana*:

Metta bhavana is a meditation practice in which we meditate for ourselves and for others too. In this meditation practice it has five parts in the first part we meditate for ourselves and we say I should be happy and I should be healthy and I should achieve growth and success. In second part we meditate same for our close friend in third part we meditate for a person we don't like and in the fifth part we meditate for whole universe. This meditation practice helps in developing compassion and friendship.

IV. MINDFULNESS: MAHASATIPATTHANA SUTTA (THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON FOUNDATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MINDFULNESS)

Atapi Sampajano Satima¹⁰ (keen effort clearly comprehending with mindfulness.) This significant phrase is of utmost importance to understand the mindfulness practice.

In *Mahasatipatthana sutta* Buddha says; *Vineyya loke Abhijjhadomanassam* which means removing greed and sorrow from the world.

Mahasatipatthana sutta has divided into four sections – *Kayanupassana* (the observing of body), *Vedanupassana* (the observation of sensation), *Cittanupassana* (the observation of mind), *dhammanupassana* (the

¹⁰ DN 22.

observation of mental objects).

Kayappakopan rakkheyya Kayena sanvuto siya¹¹

Kayaducaritam hitva Kayena sucaritam caretā

One should avoid physical misconduct, be restrained in your actions. do not do physical misconduct and practice good physical conduct.

4.1. Kayanupassana – The observation of body

Anapanapabbam - (Mindfulness of respiration) when we breathe in and breathe out we take a long breath, when we breathe in and breathe out we take a short breath. By practicing this process we know our body and mind consciously so we know our body internally and externally.

Iriyapathapabbam – (Postures of the body) we observe body in body internally and externally.

Sampajanapabbam – (Thorough understanding of impermanence) while sleeping, walking, awake, sitting, standing.

Patikulamanasikarapabbam - (Reflections on repulsiveness of the body) focuses the mind on the impure nature of the body and sensations to reduce attachments and desires.

Dhatumanasikarapabbam – (Contemplation of dhatus which are body and mind) earth (*pathavi*), water (*apo*), fire (*tejo*), air (*vayo*), space (*akasa*), consciousness (*vinna*). Meditation on these Dhatus to get an understanding of impermanence.

Navasivathikapabbam - (Nine observations of decay) to practice overcoming physical attachment. The body undergoes various stages until death. By practicing this meditation we get the understanding of the impermanence of the body.

*Kayena samvuta dhira atho vacaya samvuta*¹²

Manasa samvuta dhira te ve suparisamvuta.

Only those people who have control on their body, speech and mind are completely controlled.

4.2. Vedananupassana - (The observation of sensations.) Observing the feelings as they arise whether pleasant (*sukkah vedana*) or unpleasant (*dukkha vedana*) neutral (*adukkham asukha vedana*), this practice creates emotional stability.

*Manopakopam rakkheya manasa samvuto siya*¹³

Manoducharitam hitva manasa sucaritam caretā

One should avoid mental misconduct, be mentally restrained. Leave mental misconduct and practice mental good conduct.

¹¹ *Dhammapada*, Kodha vagga 131.

¹² *Dhammapada*, Kodhavagga 234.

¹³ *Dhammapada*, Kodhavagga 233.

4.3. Cittanupassana - (the observation of mind) observing the mind enhances mental clarity, calmness, resilience, awareness, equanimity.

4.4. Dhammanupassana - (observation of mental objects)

Nivarana Sabbam - Mental obstacles that restrict spiritual and mental growth. Which are sensual desires (*Kamcachanda*), ill will (*Vyapada*), sloth and torpor (*Thinamiddha*), agitation (*Uddhaccakukkucca*), Doubt (*Vicikiccha*).

Khandhapabbam - five aggregates (*rupa, vedana, sannya, sankhara, vinnana*) body, feelings, perception, mental formations, consciousness respectively.

Ayatanapabbam - six sense bases through these senses we experience the world (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) *Cakkhu, sota, ghana, jivha, kaya, mano* respectively.

Bojjhanga Sabbam - seven factors of enlightenment. Which are Mindfulness (*sati*), investigation (*dhamma vicaya*), effort (*viriya*), joy (*piti*), relaxation (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samadhi*) equanimity (*upekkha*).

Saccapabbam - four noble truths. *Dukkha Sacca, Samudaya Sacca, Nirodha Sacca, Magga Sacca*. Manual of vipassana meditation: U ko lay (2002)

Ethical living (Sila):

Yo panamatipateti musavadacca bhasati ¹⁴

Loke adinnam adiyati pardaracca gacchati

Surameryapanacca yon aro anuyujjati ¹⁵

Idhevameso lokasmi mulam khanti attano.

How moral conduct fosters peace of mind – Buddha gave five virtues which are the fundamental principles in Buddhism. Which are –

Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami – This virtue says I abstain myself from killing.

Adinnadana veramani Sikkhapadam Samadiyami - this virtue says I abstain myself from taking what is not given

Kamesu miccachara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - this virtue says I abstain myself from sensual misconduct.

Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - this virtue says I abstain myself from false speech.

Sura merya majja pamada atthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - this virtue says I abstain myself from taking intoxicants.

By following these five virtues a human being can cultivate peace in his mind. because when we do not indulge in activities like theft, lie, killing we do not fear from anyone our mind is free, our thoughts are mindful. To get the

¹⁴ *Dhammapada*, Mallavaggo 246.

¹⁵ *Dhammapada*, Mallavaggo 247.

peace of mind one should follow the buddha's teachings which says –

I purify my mind by having compassion, equanimity, and friendship towards living and non-living things.

I purify my body by the act of generosity.

I purify my body by having patience, simplicity, and peace.

I purify my words by having rightful speech.

I purify my mind by having good remembrance and good ethical conduct.

***Sigalovada sutta*¹⁶:**

A child should support his family and perform his duties to maintain a peaceful environment in the family and also parents should encourage them to do so.

Teachers should train their students to create harmony and peace amongst them. A noble person should be truthful and compassionate towards every human being. Masters and servants should be respectful to each other to create a peaceful environment.

4.5. Detachment from material desires:

*Yo ca buddhaca dhammaca sngahacca saram gato*¹⁷

Cattari ariyasaccani sammappanyaya passati

*Dukkham dukkhasamutpadam dukkhassa ca atikammam*¹⁸

Ariyasaccatingikam maggam dukkhupassamgamin.

One who has taken refuge in buddha, dhamma and sangha. Who has seen with perfect wisdom the four noble truths-suffering, the origin of suffering, liberation from suffering and the noble eight fold path leading to liberation this is the auspicious refuge.

Buddhist concepts of impermanence and non-attachment.

Sabbe Sankhara Anicca

Sabbe Sankhara Dukkha

Sabbe Dhamma Anatta

All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.

All conditioned phenomena are dukkha.

All phenomena (*dhamma*) are without self.

When one sees this with insight and wisdom, one becomes weary of dukkha (*Khandhas*).

This is the path to purity

Conditioned existence is impermanent (*Anicca*)

¹⁶ DN 31.

¹⁷ *Dhammapada*, Buddhavaggo 290.

¹⁸ *Dhammapada*, Buddhavaggo 291.

Sabbe sankhara anicca ti yada panyaya passata¹⁹

Atha nibbandati dukkha aso maggo visuddhiya

As we all are aware, nothing is permanent in this world. Everything is changing every day, every hour, even every second. Life is always moving forward like a river. We cannot hold on to anything for a very long time. Nothing can stay forever neither living nor non living thing. Nothing is mortal.

As Buddha said, the existence of the world is temporary. Everything is momentary. Everything is going to be destroyed one day. Buddha has called it as a law of dependent origination.

A journey from birth to child to young man to become old and then die one day is a circle of life. From birth to death is a circle of life for every element on earth.

4.6. Conditioned existence is full of suffering (Dukkha)

Sabbe sankhara dukkha ti yada panyaya passati²⁰

Atha nibbandati dukkha aso maggo visuddhiya.

According to Buddhism there are three kinds of suffering. First is physical suffering like headache, second is latent suffering means a loss of entertainment. It's like you have something for your joy and one day you have to let it go. Hence latent suffering is one of potential sufferings. Third suffering is essential suffering which arises from the fact that no physical, material and worldly object can give complete satisfaction to the human mind because true happiness can be found only in unconditioned objects or only in truth. This means unless a person attains Buddhahood he cannot be truly a happy human being.

4.7. *Dukhan Ariyasanam* (The noble truth of sufferings)

Jati pi dukkha, Jara pi dukkha, Maranam pi dukkham, sokaparidevadukkhadomanassu payasa pi dukkha.yam piccham na Labhti Tam pi dukkham , sankhittena pancupadana dukkha.

Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering, also grief, pain, sorrow and despair is suffering, not getting what we want is also suffering. In brief, attachment to anything is the cause of suffering.

4.7.1. Vedana (feeling) is a dukkha

Humans and animals both feel dukkha. Humans and animals have feelings of attachment that is the root cause of dukkha. There is a hidden suffering behind all pleasant experiences of life. To comprehend the dukkha one needs to understand the wider world view of Buddha and see that the most suffering will be in future rebirth unless one attains at least the sotapanna stage of nibbana that is why it take a lot of time to gain wisdom and truly start on the path. Since our senses cannot sense other realms.

¹⁹ *Dhammapada*, Maggavaggo 277.

²⁰ *Dhammapada*, Maggavaggo 278.

4.7.2. Dukkha – dukkha

Physical suffering includes physical and mental suffering of birth, ageing, illness, dying, distress due to what is not desirable.

4.7.3. Viparinama dukkha

The frustration of disappearing happiness. Dukkha of pleasant or happy experience changes to unpleasant.

4.7.4. Sankhara dukkha

The dissatisfaction of changing & impermanent things. The lack of lasting satisfaction or sense that things never measure up to our expectations.

4.8. Conditioned existence is *anatma* (*anatta*)

*Sabbe dhamma anatta ti yada panyaya passati*²¹

Atha nibbandati dukkhe aso maggo visuddhiya.

Our Worldly cycle of events is not real. We do not have real personalities. If we look into ourselves, we will find how shallow, how unreal and how empty we are. Our thoughts are feelings are not real. We do not feel ourselves to be right, pure or authentic within. The fact is we cannot find the slightest reality of authenticity or true personality in worldly things but all this can be found in unconditioned reality.

Soul & No Soul

In Brahmajala sutta, Buddha said there is no Atma and Anatma.

Soul- in the sense of an unchanging entity. For example, most religious believe one's soul goes to hell and heaven and then the soul stays in that stage for forever.

No Soul

No soul defined by material list. i.e a person is just the body (with thoughts arising from the material brain) and when one dies that is nothing survives physical death.

These two extremes were rejected by Buddha. The Buddha and his teachings: Narada(1988).

4.9. Self-compassion and forgiveness:

Treating ourselves with kindness, care and Love is self-compassion

Being aware of our thoughts, emotions and sensation is self-compassion.

Forgiveness is an art of letting go, it heals the mind and liberates us from pain.

“Learning to forgive is much more useful than merely picking up a stone and throwing it at the object of one's anger, the more so when the provocation is extreme. For it is under the greatest adversity that there exists the greatest potential for doing good, both for oneself and others.”

²¹ Dhammapada, Maggavaggo 279.

Life's purpose of happiness can be gained only if people cultivate the basic human values of compassion, caring and forgiveness

Dalai Lama²²

Importance of self-acceptance and forgiving oneself and others:

Self-acceptance and self-forgiveness can help you improve your mental health and emotional health.

Example - Devadatta tried to kill Buddha three times, first by employing archer's to kill buddha , secondly by rolling down the big piece of rock on Buddha from Gijjhakuta hill , and thirdly by causing the elephant nalagiri to attack the Buddha ,but the hired archer returned without harming buddha after attaining sotapanna , and that big rock hurt the Buddha just a little, and the elephant become submissive in front of Buddha .but Buddha forgave Devadatta for his all harmful acts .²³

V. INNER PEACE AS A CATALYST FOR WORLD PEACE

5.1. Individual transformation leading to social change

The ripple effect of inner peace in resolving interpersonal conflicts. Ripple effects transform us into becoming a more calm and Empathetic person. We create an environment in which people around us feel more comfortable and relaxed and safe. When conflict arises, our inner peace tries to handle the situation with empathy and clarity. This impact can be felt in communities, societies, and even globally.

The Dalai Lama has said that inner peace is a key to world peace. He believes that inner peace can lead to peaceful individuals, families, communities, and ultimately a peaceful world.

In the time of war

“Raise in yourself the mind of compassion

Help living beings

Abandon the will to fight

Wherever there is furious battle

Use all your might

To keep both sides strength equal

And then step into the conflict to reconcile.”

From Thich Nhat Hanh²⁴

5.2. Collective actions and grassroots movements

Communities build on mindful individual creates movements for peace

Mindful communities comprise likeminded people who share the same values and vision.

²² Dalai Lama quotes.

²³ *Digha nikaya, Mahamegha sutta.*

²⁴ The Miracle of Mindfulness.

It fosters open communication and space for individuals to share their thoughts and feelings.

It focuses on personal growth and training individuals towards the mindfulness journey.

It addresses social economic and environmental problems and provides cohesive solutions to these problems.

Mindfulness based conflicts resolution program

Na ta mata pita kayira ainye vapi ca yantka²⁵

Sammapanihitam cittam seyyaso na tato kare

These programs help enhance the ability to manage and resolve conflicts. It promotes self-awareness, self-motivation and self-regulation, active listening, empathy and active communication. It reduces stress and anxiety. Its helps in promoting personal and professional relationships.

5.3. Policies and education required for peace

Importance of integrating mindfulness and ethical living into education and public policy.

In the educational field - Mindfulness practices reduce stress, depression, anxiety in students. It increases productivity in students and helps in improving cognitive ability and cultivates ethics, social skills, morality and self-observance in students. It emphasizes creating a critical environment in students to foster critical thinking, moral reasoning and discussion making.

In Public policy - Mindfulness and ethical living help in reducing social conflicts and promote social harmony. Mindfulness and ethical loving public policy raised awareness about social and environmental injustice to create a positive change. It promotes sustainable lifestyle choices among people and it's an initiative to promote public health policy and mental health policy.

5.4. Successful implementation of peace education, worldwide

Often known as the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, the new UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development is a groundbreaking guideline that outlines the changes that must be made in and through education in order to achieve these objectives.²⁶

It provides teacher's training and resources to teach peace education. It promotes harmony between schools, communities and societies to develop peace education.

It promotes and respects cultural and linguistic differences.

²⁵ *Dhammapada*, Cittavaggo 43.

²⁶ <https://www.unesco.org/en/global-citizenship-peaceeducation/recommendation#:~:text=Education%20plays%20a%20key%20role,the%20world%20and%20treat%20o>

Global organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUREAU works towards promoting peace education worldwide.

VI. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS FOR ACHIEVING INNER PEACE

Internal Challenges in cultivating inner peace

*Vacanurakkho mansa susanvuto Kayena ca akusalam na kayira*²⁷

Aite tayo kammapathe visodhaye aragye maggamisippaveditam.

Difficulty in achieving inner peace due to personal struggles like trauma stress and lack of resources.

Lack of self-awareness, disconnection from nature, unearthly attachments towards living and nonliving things, emotional reactivity, impulsivity, anger, unconscious biases, inequality, Injustice, fear, anxiety, aggression, and defensiveness are some major reasons for not achieving inner peace.

External Challenges in cultivating inner peace for world peace

Nurturing inner peace is crucial for fostering world peace; however, there are various external obstacles that can complicate this process. Listed below are some of the main external challenges:

6.1. Social and political instability

Explanation: In areas experiencing political turmoil or social unrest, external elements like war, civil strife, corruption, and inequality can hinder individuals from focusing on nurturing inner peace. These circumstances lead to heightened stress, fear, and anxiety, which make it challenging to achieve tranquility within oneself.²⁸

Buddhism's primary goal is to investigate how the human mind contributes to suffering and how it might be resolved. This essay investigates how inner serenity is developed via this examination of the human mind. Based on the practice of several mental functions – contemplative mind, profound cognitive change defined by an interdependent, interpenetrating understanding of reality, and compassionate mind – in a synergistic manner, the study suggests inner peace as a non-dualistic peace. In other words, inner peace is the realization that our pleasure and well-being are inextricably linked to that of others, which motivates us to work toward meeting everyone's basic needs and advancing our freedom, justice, and equality for all.

Cited Reference: https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol21_2/Tanabe%20FINAL.pdf.²⁹

6.2. Economic inequality

Description: Economic disparity and poverty are major sources of stress

²⁷ *Dhammapada*, Maggavaggo 281. Conflict, violence, and insecurity obstruct the psychological health of people, hindering efforts to develop inner peace (Hoge, 2010).

²⁸ Conflict, violence, and insecurity obstruct the psychological health of people, hindering efforts to develop inner peace (Hoge, 2010).

²⁹ https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol21_2/Tanabe%20FINAL.pdf.

that hinder people's ability to concentrate on personal growth or achieve inner tranquility. Those living in poverty may be focused on survival and fulfilling basic necessities, leaving minimal space for introspection or self-care.

Reference: As stated by the World Health Organization (2014), socio-economic factors play a crucial role in determining health and well-being, which in turn affects an individual's ability to attain inner peace.³⁰

6.3. Cultural and religious differences

Description: Varied beliefs and values frequently result in misunderstandings and conflicts among individuals and nations. Cultural conflicts can disrupt harmony and make it challenging for people to sustain inner peace, especially when external parties impose their perspectives on others.

Reference: Appleby (2000) identified that religious and cultural differences act as obstacles to peace-building initiatives, impeding individuals' capacity to rise above divisive elements and attain personal serenity.³¹

6.4. Media and information overload

Description: The relentless influx of information, much of which is negative, from news sources and social media can heighten stress and anxiety. This continuous exposure to crises, disasters, and conflicts may hinder individuals from maintaining their sense of inner peace.³²

Reference: "The non-stop news cycle and the pervasiveness of social media have intensified stress levels, impacting personal mental well-being and obstructing inner tranquility" (Berman, 2017).³³

6.5. Environmental degradation

Description: The worldwide environmental crisis, encompassing climate change, natural disasters, and a decline in biodiversity, can be daunting for individuals. The anxiety and fear associated with environmental harm can hinder people's ability to nurture peace within themselves.³⁴

Reference: "The growing dangers resulting from environmental degradation, such as natural disasters and scarcity of resources, increase global

³⁰ As stated by the World Health Organization (2014), socio-economic factors play a crucial role in determining health and well-being, which in turn affects an individual's ability to attain inner peace

³¹ Appleby (2000) identified that religious and cultural differences act as obstacles to peace-building initiatives, impeding individuals' capacity to rise above divisive elements and attain personal serenity.

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³³ The non-stop news cycle and the pervasiveness of social media have intensified stress levels, impacting personal mental well-being and obstructing inner tranquility. (Berman, 2017)

³⁴ The non-stop news cycle and the pervasiveness of social media have intensified stress levels, impacting personal mental well-being and obstructing inner tranquility" (Berman, 2017).

stress and obstruct the pursuit of a tranquil mindset” (Goleman, 2009).³⁵

6.6. Globalization and alienation

Description: Although globalization can promote interconnectedness, it can also result in feelings of disconnection and isolation. The erosion of local identities and the overwhelming influx of outside influences may lead to a sense of being uprooted, which can impede one’s capacity to attain inner peace

Reference: “The process of globalization has resulted in an identity crisis, where individuals find it difficult to establish a sense of belonging, which further diminishes both personal tranquility and communal cohesion” (Bauman, 2000).³⁶

6.7. Violence and war

Description: The continuous violence and warfare occurring globally represent one of the most immediate external obstacles to fostering inner peace. The extensive trauma inflicted by violent conflicts, forced migration, and suffering hinders individuals from attaining mental serenity.

Reference: The United Nations (2017) states that the psychological effects of war on individuals are significant, obstructing personal peace and contributing to worldwide instability.³⁷

6.8. Institutional systems of oppression

Description: Systemic oppression – such as racism, sexism, and authoritarian rule – creates an environment where individuals feel disregarded and powerless, which can make the pursuit of inner peace seem unattainable. This struggle constantly creates mental instability.

Reference: “Racial and gender inequalities have been shown to diminish well-being, making it challenging for those affected to achieve a peaceful state of mind” (Williams & Mohammed, 2009).³⁸

*Atta hi attano natho atta hi attano gati*³⁹

Tasma sanyamyattanam assa bhadrav vanijo

Man is his own master, he is his own being therefore he should discipline himself just like a hunter controls a beautiful horse’

³⁵ The growing dangers resulting from environmental degradation, such as natural disasters and scarcity of resources, increase global stress and obstruct the pursuit of a tranquil mindset. (Goleman, 2009).

³⁶ The process of globalization has resulted in an identity crisis, where individuals find it difficult to establish a sense of belonging, which further diminishes both personal tranquility and communal cohesion” (Bauman, 2000).

³⁷ The United Nations (2017) states that the psychological effects of war on individuals are significant, obstructing personal peace and contributing to worldwide instability.

³⁸ Racial and gender inequalities have been shown to diminish well-being, making it challenging for those affected to achieve a peaceful state of mind (Williams & Mohammed, 2009.)

³⁹ *Dhammapada*, Bhikkhuvaggo 379.

Global Corporation and collaboration in promoting inner peace and wellbeing and social justice.

Mindfulness practices self-care and mediation helps in cultivating inner peace for world peace.

Mindfulness practices in school, workplaces communities and social gathering advocates inner peace for world peace.

Emotional intelligence, social emotional learning, cognitive development promotes inner peace for world peace.

Sabbapapassa Akaranam Kuslasya Upasampada ⁴⁰

Saccitapariyodapanam etan buddhanusasanam

VII. CONCLUSION

In summary, the path to global peace starts with nurturing inner tranquility within each person. This fundamental concept highlights the profound link between personal serenity and international harmony. At its essence, inner peace encompasses not merely a mental state but also a constant practice - an ongoing journey of self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience. In a world that often moves quickly and is fraught with turmoil, where strife and separation are prevalent, the quest for inner peace serves as a crucial remedy for the confusion and disharmony that exist. To cultivate a world where peace prevails, we must first turn our focus inward, for true world peace cannot occur unless individuals accept tranquility within themselves.

Inner peace can be developed through various techniques, including mindfulness, meditation, self-examination, and compassion. These techniques enable individuals to become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and responses, empowering them to face life's obstacles with serenity and clarity. When individuals find peace within themselves, they naturally demonstrate kindness, empathy, and understanding toward others. This change in mindset encourages collaboration and decreases the chances of conflict. Essentially, when individuals experience internal peace, they exude that tranquility outward, positively impacting their relationships, communities, and even entire nations.

Moreover, nurturing inner peace tackles the underlying issues of numerous global disputes, such as anger, fear, and misunderstanding. These emotions frequently drive animosity, division, and violence. By learning to handle and convert these feelings into peaceful reactions, individuals help to break the cycle of conflict and foster an environment in which amicable resolutions can thrive. Inner peace provides individuals with the emotional wisdom needed to manage differences without resorting to hostility, thus promoting more productive conversations and mutual respect.

The impact of individual inner peace can be significant. As more people begin their journeys of self-exploration and emotional steadiness, entire

⁴⁰ *Dhammapada*, Buddhavaggo 283.

communities can start to undergo transformation. Those who engage in mindfulness and emotional regulation are more inclined to cultivate environments of cooperation and harmony, even amidst difficulties. If enough individuals embrace this collective effort, it has the potential to resonate across countries, leading to a more peaceful global community. The notion that “peace begins within” serves to remind us that no international initiative, political accord, or diplomatic effort can truly succeed without individuals exemplifying the influence of inner calm.

Additionally, inner peace nurtures a profound sense of interconnectedness. When people recognize that their thoughts, actions, and energies contribute to the larger whole, they are motivated to act with kindness, respect, and love toward others. This collective embrace of interconnectedness possesses the ability to bridge gaps, eliminate biases, and unify individuals across cultural, racial, and ideological divides. By prioritizing shared humanity over differences, inner peace emerges as a catalyst for social and political transformation that fosters global unity.

Ultimately, the pursuit of inner peace is not solely a personal mission but a shared obligation. Every small gesture of kindness, tolerance, and understanding creates ripples that extend far beyond the individual. By learning to nurture peace within ourselves, we lay the groundwork for a more harmonious world. Thus, the quest for inner peace is not only advantageous for the individual but also crucial for establishing enduring peace globally. In a world characterized by divisions and conflict, inner peace holds the promise of transformative change, paving the way for a future where peace, love, and respect thrive. The journey toward global peace commences within, and it is through our personal dedication to inner tranquility that we can initiate the creation of a serene and peaceful world for everyone.

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BUDDHIST APPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



WAR AND PEACE: A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION FROM THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The concept of war is a longstanding and complex issue. In modern times, the world seeks peaceful resolutions to conflicts, aligning with Buddhist teachings that emphasize compassion, tolerance, and inner peace. This paper explores the Buddhist perspective on war and how its principles can inform contemporary conflict resolution efforts. Key questions include: (1) How do fundamental Buddhist teachings address war? (2) What role do compassion, tolerance, and inner peace play in resolving disputes? (3) How can Buddhist principles be applied to modern conflicts? Using a qualitative approach, this study analyzes key Buddhist texts such as the Pāli Canon, Maha Dukkakkhanda Sutta, and Sakka Saṃyutta. Historical and contemporary case studies illustrate how Buddhist teachings have influenced conflict resolution. The Buddha rejected war, viewing it as a source of suffering and hatred. In the Pāli Canon, he states, “Victory breeds hatred, and the defeated cannot live happily,” underscoring the futility of war. The Patama Sāmagāma and Dutiya Sāmagāma Suttas recount a war between King Kosala and King Ajasatta, where the Buddha’s sermon emphasized tolerance over vengeance. Buddhism links war to desire, as the Maha Dukkakkhanda Sutta highlights lust as the root of conflicts. The Sakka Saṃyutta further illustrates the dangers of aggression through the war between gods and demons. Ultimately, the Buddhist path promotes mindfulness, self-awareness, and inner peace as the foundation for conflict resolution. By cultivating compassion and wisdom, individuals can transcend destructive emotions, leading to a more peaceful world. The Buddhist perspective sees war not just as an external struggle but also as an internal conflict, advocating inner transformation as the key to lasting peace. Through these teachings, humanity can aspire to a world free from violence and suffering.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The contrasting concepts of war and peace have long fascinated scholars, fuelling philosophical discussions and ethical reflections throughout various cultures and historical periods. War is often associated with chaos, suffering, and fear, while peace is envisioned as an ideal state characterized by harmony and collaboration. Historically, the destructiveness of war has prompted widespread critiques, leading thinkers and leaders to grapple with how to achieve sustainable peace without resorting to violence. Through this lens, the Buddhist perspective on war and peace provides a distinctive viewpoint for analysing these concepts.

Rooted in the teachings of the Buddha, Buddhism offers a structured perspective on the moral aspects of conflict and the nature of human desire. The essence of many conflicts is linked to dissatisfaction and turmoil within the human mindset, often manifesting as craving and attachment. Central texts in Buddhism, such as the *Paṭama Sāmgāma Sutta* and *Dutiya Sāmgāma Sutta* found in the *Samyuttanikāya* highlight the futility inherent in conflict, indicating that battles only serve to perpetuate cycles of suffering. The Buddha's insights into ancient conflicts among rulers reveal a deeper understanding of the emotional and psychological consequences of war, stressing that true happiness transcends notions of winning or losing.

This paper aims to explore the intricate relationship between war and peace, focusing on definitions, origins, and teachings related to these concepts from both contemporary and Buddhist perspectives. By juxtaposing modern views on conflict with insights from Buddha, we seek to uncover pathways toward achieving understanding and harmony in a world often marred by discord. Ultimately, our examination will address how the principles inherent in Buddhist wisdom can contribute to the creation of a lasting peace not only within individual lives but also within broader societies facing the shadows of war.

II. THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD “WAR”: MODERN VIEW

War has been an enduring and devastating aspect of human history, marked by destruction, loss, and profound societal disruption. The understanding of war has evolved, shaped by philosophical, social, and political influences. In contemporary discourse, war is often defined as a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by the following:

(1) **Organized Groups:** Conflicts typically occur between two or more organized entities such as nations, states, or armed groups each possessing a defined identity and leadership structure.

(2) **Violence and Destruction:** The use of force and violence is essential to war, resulting in significant damage to individuals, communities, and the environment. Destruction of infrastructure and property often accompanies conflicts.

(3) Substantial Loss of Life: War invariably leads to the loss of numerous lives, affecting not only combatants but also civilians and prisoners of war.

(4) Social Upheaval: War disrupts social norms, causes displacement, and creates lasting impacts on cultural identities, economies, and communities.

(5) Armed Conflict: War is characterized by the employment of armed force, involving military tactics, equipment, and strategies.

Modern perspectives emphasize that conflicts arise from a complex interplay of factors, including: Conflicting Interests: Tensions often result from competing ideologies or resources; Territorial Disputes: Disagreements over land and borders are common triggers for conflict; Desires for Power and Control: The quest for dominance may ignite warfare as groups seek authority over others.¹

III. THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD “WAR”: THE BUDDHIST VIEW

Buddhism articulates a viewpoint on war that emphasizes its destructive consequences and the value of non-violence. The Buddha’s teachings suggest that wars arise from internal conflicts within human beings, particularly through dissatisfaction and attachment.² This concept of “lust,” seen as a harmful force, propels individuals toward violence, resulting in suffering for themselves and society.

When ignorant people have a problem, they get angry with others. They start conflicts. They think they have won. But they have not won. Since war always starts in the mind, the Buddha taught that it should be controlled by the mind itself. The Buddha taught that it is good for both parties. The Buddha has stated in the *Asurindaka Sutta* that both parties will win through patience or internal control.³ The Buddha preached in the *Jabussobibrahmaba Sutta* that

¹ Social and psychological factors influencing Conflict origins and shaping negotiation Dynamics, Teresia wanjugu shiundu, Affrican Journal Imerging Issues (AJOEI), online ISSN: 2663 - 9335, p. 2.

² “*Kutopahūtā kalahā vivādā, paridevasokā sahamaccharā ca; Mānātimānā sahapēsunā ca, kutopahūtā te tadingha brūhi*”.

“*Piyappahūtā kalahā vivādā, Paridevasokā sahamaccharā ca; Mānātimānā sahapēsunā ca, Maccherayuttā kalahā vivādā; Vivādajātesu ca pesuñāni*”.

“*Piyā su lokasmim kutonidānā, ye cāpi lobhā vicaranti loke; Āsā ca nittā ca kutonidānā, ye samparāyāya narassa honti*.” *Suttanipāta a*, (1990), Pāli Text Society, p. 168.

³ “*Jayam ve maññati bālo, vācāya pharusam bhaṇam; Jayañcevassa tam hoti, yā titikkhā vijānato*”

“*Tasseva tena pāpiyo, yo kuddham paṭikujjhati; Kuddham appaṭikujjhanto, saṅgāmaṃ jeti dujjayam*.”

“*Ubhinnamattham carati, attano ca parassa ca;*

Param saṅkupitam nātvā, yo sato upasammati.”

“*Ubhinnaṃ tikicchantaṇam, attano ca parassa ca;*

there are no three weapons as powerful as non-hatred, non-violence, and self-control.⁴ The Buddha said that victory achieved by defeating someone else is not true victory. Therefore, the Buddha preached on another occasion that victory achieved by controlling one's mind is true victory.⁵

Buddhist definitions of war reveal it as a manifestation of the destructive capacity of the human mind, rooted in craving and dissatisfaction. The Buddhist approach encourages the cultivation of mindfulness and compassion as strategies to prevent war and promote peaceful cohabitation.

While contemporary views define war as a complex interplay of organized violence and destruction, Buddhism highlights the internal motivations behind conflict. Understanding these perspectives can enhance our ability to approach conflict prevention and resolution, ultimately contributing to a compassionate and harmonious world.

IV. THE HISTORY OF WAR: THE BUDDHIST VIEW

War has been an enduring aspect of humanity, inflicting suffering and loss across generations. Throughout history, various cultures have justified warfare as a necessary evil for survival or dominance. Buddhism offers a distinct lens through which to view war, portraying it as a source of chaos and destruction.

One notable historical conflict within Buddhist narratives is between King Ajatasatta of Magadha and King Kosala. According to Buddhist scriptures, Ajatasatta's ambition drove him to invade Kosala, resulting in a destructive war that culminated in Kosala's defeat.

This battle transcended mere physical confrontation; it reflected the moral and spiritual values of both kingdoms. Ajatasatta's victory was marred by his association with negative influences, while Kosala's loss revealed the strength gained from virtuous connections. The Buddha articulated that "Victory breeds hatred and the defeated cannot live happily," underscoring the inherent futility of war and its repercussions on both victors and the vanquished.

Furthermore, the Buddha's teachings portray wars as stemming from desire, lust, and the power struggle. The demons in mythology illustrate how a desire for victory leads to turmoil. In contrast, the Buddha emphasizes the significance of tolerance and compassion, asserting that true strength lies in self-control. By promoting these values, Buddhism offers insights into overcoming conflict and fostering inner peace.

Ultimately, the Buddhist perspective on war encourages reflection on personal values and actions, urging individuals to pursue peace and understanding rather than engaging in cycles of violence. By embracing the

Janā maññanti bāloti, ye dhammassa akovidā''ti Saṃyuttanikāya I, (2006), Pāli Text Society, p. 163.

⁴ *"Abyāpādo avihiṃsā, viveko yassa āvudham; Titikkhā cammasannāho, yogakkhemāya vattati., Saṃyuttanikāya V, (1976), Pāli Text Society, p. 06.*

⁵ *Attā have jitaṃ seyyo, yā cāyaṃ itarā pajā;*

Attadantassa posassa, niccaṃ saññatacārino., Dhammapada, (1993), Pāli Text Society, p.15.

Buddha's teachings, a more compassionate society can emerge, rooted in dialogue and respect.

V. ORIGIN OF WAR: THE BUDDHIST VIEW

From a Buddhist lens, the roots of war extend beyond external factors to the internal conditions of the human mind. The Buddha's teachings indicate that dissatisfaction and desire manifested as greed and lust lead to conflict. The *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta* conveys that wars arise from desires that pit individuals against one another.⁶

Buddhism recognizes that violence begets suffering, as indicated in the *Paṭama Sāmgāma Sutta* and *Dutiya Sāmgāma Sutta*. The Buddha underscores that both victors and the vanquished endure pain, emphasizing that internal peace is crucial for fostering external peace.⁷

Buddhism argues that reducing warfare necessitates addressing these underlying mental states. Individuals must quell internal turmoil to prevent aggression while practicing compassion and understanding to resolve conflicts.

Ultimately, war's origins intertwine human desires and ideological disparities. As long as dissatisfaction and anger exist within individuals, external conflicts are likely to continue. Recognizing this, Buddhism offers a framework for resolving conflicts and nurturing lasting peace.

Why does war originate?

War stands as a lamentable symbol of human suffering and dissatisfaction. Both Buddhist philosophy and modern discourse outline key elements that act as catalysts for conflict. At their core, both perspectives link war to deep-rooted dissatisfaction manifested through desire and aggression.

Why war originates: Buddhist view

Buddhism frames war as an outcome of unfulfilled desires, a key contributor to human suffering. The *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta* details how desires, material or ideological, incite discord. This sense of dissatisfaction drives aggressive behavior, creating an environment where conflict thrives. War and peace are deeply intertwined concepts in Buddhist philosophy, particularly when we examine the teachings of the Buddha. The *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta* vividly illustrates the suffering that arises from desire and attachment. It tells us that because of lust, conflicts erupt not only between kings but also among family members like mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, friends and neighbours. These disputes can escalate into violence, leading to fights with fists, sticks, or even weapons. This relentless cycle of anger and conflict highlights the profound suffering that desire can cause in our lives.⁸

⁶ "Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, kāmahetu kāmanidānaṃ kāmādhikaraṇaṃ kāmānameva hetu kāyena duccharitaṃ caranti, vācāya duccharitaṃ caranti, manasā duccharitaṃ caranti., *Majjhimanikāya I*, (1993), Pāli Text Society, p. 86.

⁷ *Samyuttanikāya I*, (2006), Pāli Text Society, p. 83.

⁸ "Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, kāmahetu kāmanidānaṃ kāmādhikaraṇaṃ kāmānameva hetu rājānopi rājūhi vivadanti, khattiyāpi khattiyehi vivadanti, brāhmaṇāpi brāhmaṇehi vivadanti,

To foster a peaceful world, we must first address the conflict within ourselves. Just like fish in a clear pond, many of us are caught in a state of constant turmoil. The Buddha teaches us an important lesson: true victory does not come from overcoming others or causing harm to countless lives in a war. Instead, the greatest triumph is to conquer our destructive feelings and reactions.

Buddhism posits that dissatisfaction is a collective phenomenon affecting society. The cyclical nature of violence stems from personal desires, leading to conflicts that fragment social ties. As expressed in the scriptures, “because of lust... kings argue with kings.”

Moreover, the futility of violent victory is emphasized in the *Patama Sāmgāma Sutta* where the Buddha notes that triumph is overshadowed by hatred and loss. The outcome of violence leads to continual bitterness of the seeds of conflict originating in the human heart.⁹

Why war originates: Modern view

In the modern context, war is interwoven with various socio-political factors. The notion of a “just war” attempts to rationalize military actions based on national security or moral imperatives, often neglecting the consequences of such violence.

Even morally justified wars can lead to catastrophic results, affecting civilian populations and perpetuating cycles of violence. Modern conflicts often stem from larger systemic issues like economic inequality and injustice, manipulated by authorities to justify military action.

Both Buddhist and modern analyses converge on the recognition that the roots of war lie in intrinsic human dissatisfaction, propelled by desire and aggression. Understanding this dissatisfaction is vital in fostering a more peaceful world. By confronting the underlying causes of conflict, it is through spiritual introspection or societal reforms that paths toward reconciliation can be forged. Ultimately, resolving our internal struggles is crucial to creating a future free from the destructive toll of violence. Cultivating understanding and compassion can lead us toward a more harmonious existence devoid of war.

Equipment for war: Modern view

Warfare equipment has undergone a profound evolution, reflecting advances in technology and shifts in military strategies. Modern conflicts employ an extensive array of tools, including:

gahapatīpi gahapatihi vivadanti, mātāpi puttana vivadati, puttapi mātārā vivadati, pitāpi puttana vivadati, puttapi pitarā vivadati, bhātāpi bhātārā vivadati, bhātāpi bhaginiyā vivadati, bhaginipi bhātārā vivadati, sahāyopi sahāyena vivadati. Te tattha kalahaviggahavivādāpannā aññamaññaṃ pāṇihipi upakkamanti, leḍḍūhipi upakkamanti, daṇḍehipi upakkamanti, satthehipi upakkamanti. Te tattha maraṇampi nigacchanti, maraṇamattampi dukkhaṃ. Ayampi, bhikkhave, kāmānaṃ ādīnava sandiṭṭhiko, dukkhakkhandho kāmahetu kāmānīdānaṃ kāmādhikaraṇaṃ kāmānameva hetu.” Majjhimanikāya I, (1993), Pāli Text Society, p. 86.

⁹ *Saṃyuttanikāya I* (2006), Pāli Text Society, p. 83.

(1) Small Arms: The backbone of military operations, including rifles and personal firearms.

(2) Heavy Artillery: Tanks and armoured vehicles that signify ground combat capabilities.

(3) Air Power: Fighter jets and drones that manipulate aerial strategies.

(4) Naval Forces: Warships and submarines that facilitate power projection.

(5) Cyber Warfare Tools: Components of modern conflict that operate in the digital realm.¹⁰

In stark contrast, Buddhist teachings advocate for non-violence, promoting the principle of *Ahimsa* (non-harm). This foundational concept inherently opposes the use of weapons that inflict damage, underscoring a commitment to achieving peace.

The Buddhist perspective on warfare

Buddhist teachings stand in stark contrast to modern warfare's mechanisms. Central to Buddhism is the principle of *Ahimsa* (non-harm), which rejects all forms of violence and harm towards living beings.

Buddhism perceives warfare and weaponry as reflections of internal conflict, as articulated in the *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta*. The violent impulses derive from unfulfilled desires and inner turmoil, while Buddhism advocates for mindfulness and compassion to resolve disputes non-violently.¹¹

The consequences of warfare extend beyond physical outcomes, affecting spiritual well-being. Both victors and vanquished carry emotional burdens, as outlined in the *Paṭama Sāmgāma Sutta*, where the Buddha notes that true triumph lies in cultivating peace within oneself rather than domination over others.

The juxtaposition of modern weaponry against Buddhist philosophies urges a revaluation of our approach to conflict. A longing for a war-free world necessitates introspection, emotional maturity, and a commitment to fostering peace.

Buddha's view of war

Buddha's teachings embody a clear disapproval of war, underscoring the profound suffering it inflicts on all living beings. His perspective is reflected in significant text in the *Dhammapada*. It illustrates that war produces suffering, irrespective of the outcomes, both victors and the defeated face psychological grief.¹²

The Buddha expressed that "*Victory breeds hatred and the defeated cannot live happily*" revealing how the desire for success only perpetuates animosity and conflict. His insights encourage individuals and leaders to recognize that

¹⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/technology/military-technology>

¹¹ *Majjhimanikāya I*, (1993), Pāli Text Society, p. 87.

¹² "*Jayam veram pasavati, dukkham seti parājito; Upasanto sukham seti, hitvā jayaparājaya*" *Samyuttanikāya I* (2006), Pāli Text Society, p. 83.

the seeds of war originate in the mind—rooted in desires and attachments.¹³

Moreover, Buddha recognized the inherent interconnectedness of all life. Harming one ultimately produces universal suffering, violating the core principle of compassion within Buddhist philosophy. Rejecting violence and promoting non-harm, the Buddha advocates for peaceful relations grounded in understanding.

The narratives surrounding King Ajasatta's conflicts with King Kosala reinforce the belief that no true triumph exists in warfare. Both outcomes yield pain and moral dilemmas. True success lies not in conquest but in fostering inner peace.¹⁴

Buddha's perspective on war reveals a meaningful moral framework calling for violence's cessation through self-understanding and compassion. Recognizing the futility of conflict and its pervasive consequences encourages individuals to seek peaceful dialogue and goodwill in pursuit of a violence-free society.

Who accounts for killing enemies? Buddhist perspective

The Buddhist Doctrine emphasises that if any loss of life is caused by any action of any person to achieve some end, whatever, such action constitutes a grave crime and should not be taken. Buddhism does not approve killing of human beings. When we speak of the killing of human beings, we refer to the killing of those who are born. But in Buddhism, even destruction of life at the stage of embryo is a killing. This indicates that Buddhism has focused attention on life with a sharp eye. But we are aware that large-scale loss of life is caused in present-day wars. We shall try to find out what sort of sin befalls on whom and how.

The Buddhist Scriptures (*Tipiṭaka*) do not define the sort of sin that befalls on whom and how in the context of the present-day war situation. Therefore, it has to be resolved based on general teachings of the Buddha on what is good and what is bad, merit and demerit. The teachings of the Buddha and also in the commentaries of well-versed Theras analyse what action ensues more merits and less merits, and how the effects of merits enhance. In the same way the Scriptures define how the consequence of demerits increase or decrease.

Merits and demerits function on ethics. The two basic ethics can be shown as what is good and what is bad. The term good may vary from religion to religion, race to race, and country to country. In certain religions, the killing of cattle is not an offence. In certain religions, killing of human beings on certain grounds is allowed. But Buddhism does not approve such killings at all, as evident in the *Ahimsa Niggaha Issue of Milinda Question*. Buddhism emphasizes that these matters should be viewed by drawing a similarity to one-self.¹⁵ *Mahā Niddesa Commentary* points out that the demerit befallen by killing a

¹³ *Dhammapada* (1993), Pāli Text Society, p. 30.

¹⁴ *Samyuttanikāya I* (2006), Pāli Text Society, p. 83

¹⁵ *Milindapañā* (1991), Pāli Text Society, p. 401

bad person is less than that of killing a pious person.¹⁶ Accordingly, the sin of killing a bigger animal is more than that of killing a small creature. Moreover, the state of repentance fluctuates according to the size and value of the animal. The time, labour, and device, and anger involved in killing a bigger animal is more than that of killing a small animal. For example, if a cow is killed in place of a man, the sin accrued thereby would be less than that of killing a man.¹⁷ A greater sin befalls on committing the five extremes since (*PañcAnantariya* Actions) killing of mother, killing of father, slaying of Arahant, and shedding blood of the Buddha's body and causing split of Sangha.¹⁸ Buddhism rejects the taking of life, and some killings are more sinful than others in consideration of the benefits achieved by the society from such respective lives.

In going through these considerations, it is hardly necessary to stress that the terrorist is a great nuisance that causes evils to the entire country and the whole world at large. Thus, it follows that the sins befallen on military persons in killing the terrorists in the interest of the sovereignty of the country and the interest of the majority people of the country should be less than that of killing a human being under normal circumstances. Even if a soldier kills a terrorist who lacks in human values and is a menace to the entire world, the sinful effect will be low. On the other hand, the soldier performs an act assigned to him by his commander and he is bound to carry out it irrespective of whether he likes it or not.

It indeed amounts to a killing, but the sin does not befall on him as he carries out an order from his immediate superior who in turn acts on the orders of higher authorities. Finally, all of them carry out orders of the Commander-in-Chief who is the head of state, channelled through the Defence Secretary and the Army Commander. Thus, the sin of killing done by a soldier would be shared by a series of authorities. The president and Commander-in-Chief are elected by the people.

That was the same even at the origin of Royal administration. The people elect the head of state with a mandate to control various corruptions and irregularities occurring in the country. Accordingly, people expect to earn the right to live peacefully and in harmony without fear. To ensure that the people elect the king or head of state with a mandate to grant that right. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the ruler to grant that right. The sin accrued in killing in the course of action to grant that right will be shared by the people who elected the ruler, and therefore the sin accrued to the soldier will further decrease.

In going through this situation as a whole, it will be seen that since the soldier kills an enemy who is an enemy to the people, to the country, and to the entire world at large, the sinful effect that befalls on the soldier would be less than that of killing an innocent man. The soldier assumes that position on the instructions issued by a series of high-ups. Therefore, the sin of taking life will

¹⁶ *Mahāniddesa Aṭṭhakathā*, *Hevāvitārana* print, p 80/81.

¹⁷ *Khuddakapāṭha Aṭṭhakathā* (1978), *Pāli Text Society*, p. 28.

¹⁸ *Anguttara Nikāya III* (1994), *Pāli Text Society*, p. 146.

be shared by all such authorities up to the head of state and also to the people who gave the mandate to the head of state. Thus, it will be clear that the soldier who sins killing will get accrued only a small share of the sin.

Buddha's teachings of war and peace

The *Pāli* Canon, the cornerstone of Theravāda Buddhism scriptures, offers valuable teachings on war and peace, focusing on ethical dimensions of conflicts and pathways to harmony. The emphasis remains on understanding internal conditions that provoke war and the practices necessary to cultivate peace in both individuals and societies.

Key teachings on war and peace

- *Dhammapada*: This collection of verses highlights loving-kindness and patience as transformative forces against enmity, reinforcing that hatred can only be overcome with love and compassion.¹⁹

- *Sigālōvāda Sutta*: This scripture elaborates on the proper conduct prescribed for maintaining peaceful relationships within various societal roles, emphasizing respect, accountability, and empathy.²⁰

- *Sutta Nipatā*: The teachings here encapsulate the importance of avoiding harm, underlining ethical behavior as vital to human interactions, ultimately fostering an environment where understanding thrives.²¹

Insights from specific Suttas

The Buddha's reflections on war are vividly captured in the *Paṭama Sāmgāma Sutta* and *Dutiya Sāmgāma Sutta*. He articulates that "Victory breeds hatred" and that both victor and vanquished suffer negative repercussions, challenging traditional views on conflict outcomes.²²

The *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta* contemplates war's roots in insatiable human desires. The need for inner resolution becomes crucial in fostering a harmonious society. His emphasis on overcoming personal struggles aligns with achieving broader peace.²³

Commentaries and further elucidations

The commentaries enhance our comprehension of Buddha's teachings by providing narratives that depict their application in daily life. Encouraging practitioners to aspire to inner peace, these texts illustrate that achieving personal harmony is essential for societal balance. Engaging in mindfulness and virtuous behavior fosters empathy and compassionate resolution of conflicts.

Ultimately, teachings from the *Pāli* Canon and its commentaries highlight the interplay between individual psychology and social dynamics.

¹⁹ "Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ, asādhūṃ sādhuṇā jine; Jine kadariyaṃ dānena, saccenālikavādināṃ." *Dhammapada*, (1993), *Pāli* Text Society, p. 01.

²⁰ *Dīghanikāya III*, (1995), *Pāli* Text Society, p. 192.

²¹ *Suttanipāta* (2017), *Pāli* Text Society, p. 169.

²² *Samyuttanikāya I*, (2006), *Pāli* Text Society, p. 83.

²³ *Majjhimanikāya I*, (1993), *Pāli* Text Society, p. 90.

The Buddha's framework offers guidance for genuine peace, suggesting that personal transformation can lead to collective healing. Through his teachings, Buddha beckons practitioners to embrace understanding and compassion.

Buddha's teachings for the settlement of war

The teachings of the Buddha illuminate pathways to peaceful conflict resolution, emphasizing dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation. Central to these teachings is recognizing that true harmony cannot stem from violence; rather, it arises from fostering compassion within ourselves.

• Dialogue and Understanding²⁴

Buddha advocated for open dialogue, believing that many misunderstandings arise from poor communication. His teachings urge individuals to embrace conversations that allow divergent viewpoints to be expressed, thereby reducing tensions. War, he argued, leads to a cycle of pain without true success for either side.

• Compassion and Mindfulness²⁵

Compassion forms a cornerstone of Buddha's conflict resolution approach. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can engage in heightened self-awareness and regulation of emotions. Such an attitude permits a calm approach to disputes, fostering understanding and healing divisions.

• Right Speech and Empathetic Communication²⁶

Buddha's teachings on "right speech" emphasize truthfulness and kindness. Such principles dismantle hostility and promote connection, reminding individuals to focus on shared humanity rather than divisive rhetoric. Empathetic communication fosters collaborative discussions.

• Healing Divisions and Restoring Relationships²⁷

Post-conflict healing is crucial; recognizing previous wrongs and striving for mutual understanding become paramount. Buddha's teachings indicate that healing lies not in the negation of grievances but in constructive dialogue.

In summary, Buddha's teachings for conflict resolution stress dialogue, compassion, and empathetic communication. Rather than perpetuating cycles of hatred, nurturing understanding can lead to a more peaceful world. The essential message is clear: peace is attainable when individuals act with kindness and an earnest desire for societal harmony.

Inner peace as a catalyst for settlement of war

Inner peace emerges as a crucial catalyst for resolving conflict.²⁸ Buddhist teachings underline the connection between individual inner tranquility and

²⁴ *Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā*, (1969), Pāli Text Society, p. 674.

²⁵ *Aṅguttara Nikāya IV*, (1979), Pāli Text Society, p. 150.

²⁶ *Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā*, (1979), Pāli Text Society, p. 674.

²⁷ *Mahāvagga Aṭṭhakathā*, (1979), Pāli Text Society, p. 674.

²⁸ "Yo sahaṣsaṃ sahaṣṣena, saṅgāme mānuse jine; Ekaṇṇa jeyyamattānaṃ sa ve saṅgāmajuttamo". *Dhammapada*, (1993), Pāli Text Society, p. 15.

societal harmony, emphasizing the roles of mindfulness, compassion, and diminished attachment in attaining global peace.

By cultivating non-attachment, individuals can rise above trivial disputes that often lead to conflicts. The Buddha's assertion that true victories lie in transcending both win and loss echoes through timeless teachings.

Mindfulness practices help individuals engage in conflict resolution with clarity rather than aggression. The *Sakka Saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* reinforces the significance of understanding adversaries, promoting tolerance over retaliation.

Achieving inner peace is a shared responsibility; as individuals seek tranquility, a collective consciousness valuing compassion can emerge. This shared energy fosters constructive approaches to global conflicts.

The *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta* illustrates that dissatisfaction often drives conflicts. Prioritizing inner peace shifts individuals' perspectives, emphasizing interconnectedness and impermanence. By surrendering attachment, one moves forward from petty disputes.

Ultimately, cultivating inner peace serves as a potent catalyst in conflict resolution. By practicing mindfulness, compassion, and reduced attachment, we foster an environment conducive to lasting peace, shaping broader societal dynamics.

Buddha's teachings for world peace

Examining war and peace through the lens of Buddha's teachings reveals a comprehensive foundation for promoting global harmony, built upon compassion and understanding. These principles guide us toward fostering a society characterized by tranquility and goodwill.

- Compassion and Loving-kindness²⁹

At the core of Buddha's vision for world peace lies *metta*, or loving-kindness, which serves as a powerful antidote to enmity. Embracing compassion promotes understanding and cooperation, compelling us to face suffering collectively. The Buddha's assertion that "*Victory breeds hatred*" encourages us to center our actions on empathy instead of domination.

- Non-attachment³⁰

Buddhism teaches non-attachment, inviting individuals to transcend self-serving desires of the root of many conflicts. The human craving for power leads to disputes; the *Mahā Dukkhaḥkhanda Sutta* demonstrates how desire incites rivalry among various entities. Letting go of this need fosters a mindset of peace, transforming greed into altruism.

- Collective Responsibility³¹

Buddhism fosters collective accountability, helping individuals recognize

²⁹ *Aṅguttara Nikāya IV*, (1979), Pāli Text Society, p. 150.

³⁰ Gethin, Rupert. (1998), *The Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press, p. 142.

³¹ Gethin, Rupert. (1998), *The Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press, p. 142.

that their actions have consequences beyond themselves. These teachings implore us to act mindfully, considering our connections within a broader community. An awareness of our interconnectedness nurtures commitments to peace that extend beyond personal realms.

- Approach to Peace³²

Buddhism advocates for a proactive stance toward peace, promoting individual transformation as essential for societal harmony. The suttas illustrate how inner conflict mirrors external strife, suggesting that resolving personal turmoil breeds broader peace. The wise avoid retaliation, emphasizing endurance and goodwill.

- Controlling our mind or ourselves³³

The Dhamma verse reminds us that our internal battles are more significant than any external skirmish. Each individual has the power to contribute to global peace through their thoughts and actions. By promoting goodwill, compassion, and understanding within ourselves, we can extend these values outward to everyone around us.

To achieve genuine peace, we must confront and resolve the social, economic, political, and cultural issues that impact our communities. This requires us to approach these challenges with an equitable mindset, treating all people, regardless of their race, caste, religion, or background with fairness and respect. By cultivating these principles in our hearts, we can work together to create a harmonious world for all.

In conclusion, Buddha's teachings provide a profound roadmap for global peace through compassion, non-attachment, collective responsibility, and proactive engagement. As we confront the tragedies of war, the urgency of shifting our consciousness becomes evident. The principles of compassion and understanding form the foundation for creating a society where conflict can be resolved amicably.

VI. CONCLUSION

According to the facts given above, teachings offer a comprehensive framework for establishing world peace through compassion, non-attachment, collective responsibility, and proactive engagement. The suffering wrought by war underscores the immediate need for a fundamental shift in consciousness. The futility of warfare is evident when we understand that victories lead to hatred and that the defeated carry deep-seated pain.

Buddha's teachings encourage us to transcend the dichotomies of winning and losing, urging us to foster a spirit of understanding. The interconnections among all beings remind us that the challenges we face stem not only from external circumstances but also from unfulfilled desires within our minds.

The timeless wisdom propagated by the Buddha inspires us towards

³² *Aṅguttara Nikāya IV*, (1979), Pāli Text Society, p. 150.

³³ *Dhammapada* (2014), Pāli Text Society, p. 15.

creating a compassionate society. By embodying the values of kindness, excitement for collective responsibility, and genuine desire for world peace, we can march toward a future where empathy prevails over aggression.

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INNER PEACE AS A CATALYST FOR GLOBAL HARMONY: EXPLORING BUDDHIST TEACHINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

The prime objective of this article is to explore the profound connection between inner peace, as articulated in Buddhist teachings, and the pursuit of global harmony in contemporary society. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and persistent social injustices, the quest for both internal tranquility and external peace has emerged as a critical concern. Inner peace, characterized by emotional balance, acceptance, and mindfulness, serves as a foundation for constructive relationships and societal resilience. By examining the multifaceted nature of peace, including the distinction between negative and positive peace, this work underscores the importance of cultivating inner tranquility as a catalyst for fostering empathy, compassion, and understanding among diverse communities.

Furthermore, the paper investigates the pressing need for global harmony amidst contemporary challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and cultural divisiveness. It advocates for a holistic approach that integrates education, open communication, and compassionate action to address the root causes of disharmony, namely greed, hatred, and delusion. Through the implementation of practical methodologies drawn from Buddhist philosophy, such as mindfulness practices and the cultivation of compassion, individuals and societies can work collaboratively towards a more just and peaceful world. Ultimately, this exploration emphasizes that the journey towards global harmony begins with the individual's inner peace and the recognition of our interconnectedness in an increasingly complex world.

Keywords: *Inner peace, global, harmony, mindfulness, world peace, non-violence, three-fold training.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by swift technological progress and unprecedented global interconnectivity, conversations about peace have gained significant importance in modern society. As individuals confront the challenges of daily life, the pursuit of both internal and external peace has become a crucial focus. Yet, it is essential to recognize that true peace originates from within;¹ by fostering harmony and understanding within ourselves, we lay the groundwork for peace in the world around us. The backdrop of persistent global conflicts, injustices, and environmental crises calls for a deeper understanding of what peace truly entails and how it can be fostered in our communities.²

Peace transcends the mere absence of conflict; it embodies a profound state of harmony, emotional well-being, and the capacity for empathy and compassion in our interactions. In an era marked by an increasing awareness of mental health challenges and the pressures of contemporary life, the quest for inner peace has emerged as a central focus for individuals navigating the turbulence of modern existence. This pursuit of tranquility can be cultivated in every moment, fostering resilience amidst chaos.³ Moreover, social movements advocating for justice, equality, and environmental sustainability reflect a collective aspiration for a more peaceful and equitable world, underscoring our shared responsibility to nurture both our inner landscapes and the broader society in which we live.

In this context, it is essential to explore the multifaceted nature of peace, examining the ways it influences personal lives and societal structures alike. By understanding the role of inner peace as a foundation for global harmony, we can begin to unravel the complexities of conflict and cultivate a world that values tranquility, respect, and cooperation. In this exploration, we can envision a future where peace is not merely an ideal but a lived reality for all.

II. INNER PEACE IN BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES

Inner peace is often understood as a state of mental and emotional tranquility characterized by mental clarity and calmness, allowing individuals to navigate life's challenges without being overwhelmed by stress or anxiety, (Lama 2018). It involves achieving emotional balance, where one can experience a range of emotions constructively, leading to greater resilience, (This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the settling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna⁴). A key aspect of inner peace is acceptance, embracing reality as it is, rather than

¹ Morihei Ueshiba, (2015), *The Art of Peace*, 3rd Edition, Boston & London: Puddle Dancer Press, p. 13.

² David P. Barash & Charles P. Webel, (2008), *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2nd Edition, California, Sage Publications, Inc., p. 1.

³ Thich Nhat Hanh, (1991), *Peace is Every Steps*, USA: Random House Group Company, p. 1.

⁴ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bhodi, (Revised Version 2001). *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 540.

resisting circumstances. Mindfulness plays a vital role, encouraging individuals to be fully present in the moment, thereby disengaging from distracting thoughts about the past or future.⁵ Moreover, inner peace fosters a detachment from excessive material desires.

Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.⁶

It encompasses a deeper connection to oneself and authentic relationships with others, enhancing overall well-being. For many, inner peace is linked to spirituality or a sense of purpose, instilling meaning in life. Effective stress management techniques such as meditation and yoga are commonly employed to cultivate this tranquility.⁷ Ultimately, inner peace reflects a holistic approach to well-being, recognizing the interconnectedness of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects, thereby contributing to a profound sense of calm and fulfillment in the complexities of modern life.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF GLOBAL HARMONY

Global harmony is increasingly recognized as a vital component of a sustainable future, especially in a world characterized by rapid globalization, cultural diversity, and interconnected challenges.⁸ From a modern perspective, the importance of global harmony transcends mere coexistence; it embodies the collective effort to cultivate understanding, respect, and empathy among diverse cultures, nations, and communities.⁹ In an era where conflicts, inequalities, and environmental crises threaten global stability, fostering harmony becomes essential to addressing these challenges cooperatively. It encourages dialogue and collaboration, enabling societies to come together in pursuit of common goals, such as peace, social justice, and environmental sustainability.¹⁰

One of the most pressing reasons for prioritizing global harmony is the interconnected nature of today's world, "we are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development."¹¹ Issues like climate change, pandemics, and economic instability

⁵ Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, (2015), USA: New World Library, p. 31.

⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourse of the Buddha*, (2000), Wisdom Publication, p. 1844.

⁷ Asst. Prof. Ven. Dr. Walmoruwe Piyaratana, *The Noble Eightfold Path and Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga: A Comparative Study*, (2024), Nugegoda: Cybergate Services (Pvt). Ltd., p. 297.

⁸ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>, accessed 02/12/2024.

⁹ <https://coachingforleaders.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/art-of-gathering.pdf>, accessed 04/12/2024.

¹⁰ https://thepeacecompany.com/store/pdf/auth_prologue_3rd_ed.pdf, accessed 04/12/2024.

¹¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>, accessed 04/12/2024.

do not respect national boundaries; they require collaborative solutions that draw on the strengths and resources of multiple nations. Modern perspectives stress that the challenges we face are collective, calling for a united front to tackle problems that affect humanity as a whole. By fostering international cooperation and understanding, societies can better address these global issues, ensuring a safer and more sustainable future for all. The above quotation from the Global Goals of the UN that aligns well with the idea of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development:

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.¹²

In order to create a brighter future, we must foster peace and inclusivity, ensuring that justice is accessible for all, and that our institutions are effective, accountable, representative of the diverse voices within our communities. The UN idea encapsulates the essence of the importance of cooperation and understanding in addressing global harmony.

Moreover, global harmony promotes cultural exchange and understanding, enriching societies by allowing diverse perspectives to thrive. In a world filled with cultural clashes and xenophobia, embracing global harmony encourages societies to celebrate their differences rather than allowing them to become sources of division. This exchange not only enhances mutual respect but also fosters innovation and creativity, as diverse ideas and practices come together to solve complex problems. Education plays a crucial role in this regard, as teaching global citizenship and intercultural competence equips individuals with the skills needed to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Aligned with UNESCO's aim, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) serves as a vital framework that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to foster a world that is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable.¹³

Furthermore, the pursuit of global harmony aligns with the principles of human rights and social equity. In modern discourse, there is a growing recognition that all individuals deserve dignity, respect, and the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their background. Promoting global harmony involves advocating for these rights on a global scale, ensuring that marginalized voices are heard and included in decision-making processes. By doing so, societies can work towards dismantling systems of oppression and inequality, fostering a world where everyone can contribute to and benefit from collective progress.

The importance of global harmony in modern times cannot be overstated. It serves as the foundation for addressing pressing global challenges, enriching

¹² <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions/> accessed 04/12/2024.

¹³ *Global Citizenship Education*, (2014), Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, p. 13.

cultures through exchange and understanding, and advancing human rights and social equity. As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, cultivating global harmony will be essential to building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world for future generations.

3.1. Understanding peace in modern world's society

When discussing the concept of peace, defining it can be quite challenging. Peace arises from a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors that foster a harmonious environment among individuals and communities. In today's context, it is essential to define peace in light of contemporary theories, as numerous factors come into play. To truly understand what peace means in modern society, we must explore various dimensions and perspectives that contribute to its definition.

Peace can be conceptualized through two distinct yet interrelated frameworks: negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is primarily characterized by the absence of violence or armed conflict. It signifies a cessation of hostilities, where the overt manifestations of war and aggression are eliminated. However, this definition of peace is often viewed as superficial, as it does not account for the underlying social, economic, and political issues that may perpetuate tension and unrest within societies. In essence, while negative peace is a critical prerequisite for stability, it does not necessarily equate to a just or harmonious society.

In contrast, positive peace encompasses a broader and more holistic understanding of societal well-being. It entails the presence of social justice, equality, and inclusive governance, thereby addressing the root causes of conflict. Positive peace advocates for systems that empower marginalized communities, promote equitable resource distribution, and foster intergroup dialogue and understanding. This approach recognizes that true peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of conditions that facilitate human flourishing and dignity.

Contemporary societies are grappling with challenges to both forms of peace. The rise of religious and communal conflicts underscores the fragility of negative peace, as tensions often simmer beneath the surface, threatening to erupt into violence. Additionally, the pursuit of positive peace is hindered by systemic inequalities, social injustices, and cultural divisions that persist in many contexts.

To achieve a sustainable and lasting peace, modern societies must address both negative and positive dimensions. This includes not only ensuring the cessation of violence through effective conflict resolution and peacekeeping mechanisms but also advocating for comprehensive social reforms that promote equity and justice. By fostering environments that encourage dialogue, mutual respect, and cooperation among diverse communities, societies can work towards a more profound and enduring peace that resonates with the ideals of both negative and positive peace. The Book *Peace in the Age of Chaos* tells Steve's journey to measure and understand peace, explores the practical

application of his work, which is gathering momentum at a rapid pace.¹⁴ In this time when we are faced with environmental, social, and economic challenges, this book shows us a way forward where Positive Peace, described as creating the optimal environment for human potential to flourish, can lead to a paradigm shift in the ways societies can be managed, making them more resilient and better capable of adapting to their changing environments.

With the globalization of our world, modern societies are celebrating the diversity of various nationalities, religions, climates, music, and countries. With all these things, our communities are communicating among them and sometimes this new interconnection is also a way to peace. By understanding each other's communities, and religious things, the modern world is respecting each other's religious things and cultural things. This respect becomes a key to the peace of modern society.

Modern education and technological advancements play a pivotal role in fostering peace within contemporary society. By equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective conflict resolution, education becomes a powerful tool in promoting understanding and cooperation among diverse groups. For instance, curricula that focus on human rights, social justice, and conflict resolution methods contribute to the cultivation of a culture of peace.

The book *Making Peace Last: A Toolbox for Sustainable Peace-building*¹⁵ by Robert Recigiano exemplifies this intersection of theory and practice. Drawing on both field experience and rigorous research, Ricigiano provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable peace-building and conflict resolution. His work serves as both a resource for practitioners and a potential textbook for academic courses on peace-building, security, and development. The methodologies presented in this book offer valuable insights into addressing some of the world's most pressing social challenges, underscoring the importance of education in fostering long-term peace.

Furthermore, technology significantly influences the pursuit of peace by facilitating globalization and enhancing communication across borders. The interconnectedness enabled by technology allows for the sharing of ideas, experiences, and solutions to conflict, thereby promoting mutual understanding and collaboration. Digital platforms can serve as spaces for dialogue and engagement, empowering individuals and communities to address grievances and build peaceful relationships.

In conclusion, the contemporary understanding of peace in modern society encompasses both mental and physical freedom. It is a complex interplay of education, technology, and social justice. Achieving peace requires not only the absence of conflict but also the presence of equitable systems that enable individuals to thrive. By leveraging the tools of modern education and

¹⁴ Steve Killelea, (2020), *The Peace in the Age of Chaos*, UK, Hardie Grant Books.

¹⁵ Robert Recigiano, (2012), *Making Peace Last: A Toolbox for Sustainable Peace-building*, New York: Routledge.

technological innovations, societies can work towards creating an environment where peace is not just a distant ideal but a sustainable reality.

3.2. Causes of disharmony from Buddhist perspectives

Greed, hatred, and delusion, often referred to as the “three roots of evil”¹⁶ in Buddhist philosophy, are considered fundamental causes of disharmony in both personal relationships and broader social contexts.

Greed (*Lobha*): Can be characterized by an insatiable desire for more; it can be material wealth, power, recognition, or even emotional validation. In personal relationships, this can manifest as possessiveness or selfishness, where one person prioritizes their own needs over those of others. Greed can lead to manipulation and exploitation, causing harm to relationships built on trust and mutual respect. For instance, a person may prioritize their financial gain over the well-being of a partner, leading to resentment and conflict.

On a societal level, greed contributes to systemic inequalities and competition, fostering environments where individuals and groups are pitted against one another. This can lead to social injustices, environmental degradation, and economic disparities, ultimately resulting in discord.

Hatred (*Dosa*): Hatred is the aversion or hostility one feels towards others, often fueled by anger, fear, or prejudice. It can manifest in personal relationships as resentment, jealousy, or conflict. Hatred can sever bonds between individuals, leading to cycles of blame and retaliation. For example, unresolved conflicts may escalate into deeper animosities, irreparable damage to friendships or familial ties.

Hatred plays a significant role in larger societal issues, contributing to discrimination, violence, and conflict between groups. Historical and ongoing conflicts, such as ethnic or religious violence, are often rooted in deep-seated hatred, which perpetuates cycles of suffering and retaliation.

Delusion (*Moha*): Delusion refers to ignorance or misunderstanding of the true nature of oneself and reality. It encompasses misconceptions about the self, others, and the world, often leading to distorted perceptions.

Delusion can result in unhealthy attachments and unrealistic expectations in relationships. For instance, romantic partners might harbor illusions about each other, which lead to dissatisfaction and conflict once the reality sets in.

On a broader scale, delusion can contribute to societal issues by preventing individuals from recognizing and addressing systemic problems. For example, people may remain unaware of their biases or the impact of their actions on others, hindering progress toward social justice and harmony.

Greed, hatred, and delusion are seen in Buddhism as root causes of disharmony because they lead to conflict, suffering, and a lack of understanding among individuals and communities. By fostering awareness of these poisons,

¹⁶ Narada, (1987), *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 5th Edition, Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, p. 16.

individuals can work towards cultivating qualities such as generosity, compassion, and wisdom, which are essential for building harmonious relationships and a peaceful society. Addressing these root causes is crucial for achieving both personal well-being and collective harmony.

Perceptualism, in the context of Buddhism, highlights how individual perceptions can shape our understanding of reality, often leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. Each person interprets the world through their own experiences, beliefs, and biases, which can result in a subjective view that feels definitive to them. When individuals are firmly rooted in their perceptions, they may feel compelled to share their views with others, often trying to persuade them to adopt the same beliefs. This insistence on validating one's perspective can create a climate of disagreement and hostility, especially when others refuse to acknowledge or accept these viewpoints. Such scenarios reveal the fragile nature of interpersonal relationships, where differing perceptions can escalate into tensions, misunderstandings, and even verbal confrontations.

There are no ties for one is devoid of perceptions.

There are no illusions for one who is released through wisdom.

But those who have grasped perception and view wander in the world, offending.¹⁷

As the conflict deepens, the potential for escalation increases, leading to more severe forms of discord, including physical aggression. When dialogue fails and perceptions clash, individuals or groups may resort to weapons and violence, viewing their reality as the only truth and demonizing those who oppose them. This cycle of conflict illustrates the dangers of rigid adherence to one's perception, as it can blind individuals to alternative viewpoints and shared humanity.

Buddhism teaches that recognizing the transient nature of perceptions can pave the way for greater compassion, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. By cultivating awareness and empathy toward differing perceptions, individuals can mitigate conflicts and work towards resolution, fostering an environment where dialogue prevails over violence.

In this profound passage from “the Great Discourse on the Mass of Suffering, the Buddha lays bare the destructive nature of sensuality and its role as a catalyst for conflict and suffering.” He illustrates how the attachment to sensual pleasures, be it wealth, status, or personal gratification, underlies disputes not just among rulers or social classes but even within the most intimate relationships: families and friendships. This pervasive attachment creates a framework of competition and rivalry, where individuals prioritize their desires over the well-being of others, leading to an array of quarrels that escalate into physical violence. The Buddha's depiction serves as a stark reminder that when sensuality governs our actions and motivations, it can

¹⁷ K. R. Norman, (1992), *The Group of Discourses*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 98.

plunge individuals and communities into a cycle of suffering, causing loss, pain, and ultimately, a deep sense of disconnection from one another.¹⁸

In the modern world, the implications of this teaching remain profoundly relevant. As society continues to grapple with the consequences of rampant consumerism, social media-driven validation, and the relentless pursuit of pleasure, the resulting disharmony mirrors the Buddha's warnings. Individuals often find themselves caught in a cycle of comparison and competition, leading to strife not only within communities but also in personal relationships. This ongoing struggle for sensual fulfillment can result in emotional turmoil and an erosion of trust and compassion among people. Therefore, the Buddha's insights call for a reflective examination of our attachments and desires, encouraging a shift toward mindfulness and empathy as means to cultivate harmony and reduce the "mass of stress" that arises from our incessant cravings, ultimately steering us toward a more peaceful coexistence.

The Buddha's observations about attachment to pleasurable things leading to quarrels and disputes resonate vividly in today's social landscape.

From what is dear arises quarrels, disputes, lamentation, grief, together with avarice also, pride and arrogance, together with slander, too. Quarrels (and) disputes are joined with avarice, and there are slanders, too, when disputes have arisen.¹⁹

In a world driven by consumerism, social media, and the constant pursuit of personal gratification, individuals increasingly view possessions, status, and even relationships as extensions of themselves, sources of identity and validation. When these attachments are threatened or challenged, the resulting fear of loss can provoke intense rivalries and conflicts. People often prioritize their desires and interests over communal harmony, leading to a "me-first" mentality that fosters division and discord.

In modern society, this attachment manifests in forms, such as the desire for material wealth, the pursuit of professional advancement, and the quest for social recognition. The competitive nature of such pursuits can create an environment where individuals are pitted against one another, fostering jealousy, resentment, and hostility. Relationships become transactional rather than grounded in genuine connection, leading to misunderstandings and emotional estrangement among friends, family members, and communities. The Buddha's insight illuminates how these attachments can lead to a breakdown of trust and compassion, resulting in social disharmony that echoes through workplaces, neighborhoods, and even broader societal structures.

Moreover, the *anonymity* and *distance* afforded by digital platforms can exacerbate these issues, as individuals feel emboldened to engage in confrontations that they avoid in face-to-face interactions. The resulting

¹⁸ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2001), *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 181.

¹⁹ K. R. Norman, (1992), *The Group of Discourses*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 99.

online quarrels and polarizing debates reflect the underlying dissatisfaction and disconnection bred by attachment to personal opinions and identities. Therefore, the Buddha's teachings serve as a crucial reminder of the need to cultivate awareness and moderation in our attachments, fostering empathy and understanding in place of rivalry and conflict. By recognizing our shared humanity and the transient nature of material desires, we can work toward healing the social rifts that arise from attachment and ultimately create a more harmonious and compassionate society.

The Buddha's teachings in *the Great Discourse of Destruction of Craving*,²⁰ highlight the crucial role that *misunderstanding* and *ignorance* play in fostering social disharmony. When individuals lack awareness of their cravings and attachments, they become susceptible to various forms of conflict, resulting in stress and suffering for themselves and others.

In contemporary society, this dynamic is evident in how people engage with one another across diverse contexts. Ignorance; whether it be a lack of understanding about differing beliefs, cultures, or lifestyles, can lead to misconceptions and stereotypes, which breed division. When individuals cling to their views and attachments, they often fail to recognize the interconnectedness they share with others, leading to defensiveness and hostility.²¹ The more one perceives their possessions, opinions, or identities as a measure of their self-worth, the less open they become to alternative perspectives.

Moreover, the pervasive influence of social media exacerbates these misunderstandings. Online platforms often create echo chambers where people interact only with like-minded individuals, reinforcing their existing beliefs while deepening their ignorance about opposing views. This environment can foster a culture of polarization, where misunderstandings flourish, and escalate, often manifesting as vitriol rather than constructive dialogue.

The Buddha's emphasis on mindfulness and awareness serves as a remedy for this cycle of misunderstanding and disunion. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can begin to recognize their own biases and attachments, leading to greater self-awareness. This self-reflection can foster compassion towards others, even those with differing perspectives. When individuals approach conversations with an open heart and a willingness to listen, they create opportunities for connection and understanding.

Encourage open dialogue and active listening is essential for bridging divides and fostering social harmony. When people engage respectfully and are curious about each other's experiences and beliefs, they can dismantle misconceptions and build a sense of community that transcends personal desires and attachments.

²⁰ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2001), *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publication, pp. 349 - 361.

²¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2000), *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, Volume II, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 1523.

The Buddha's teachings remind us that ignorance and misunderstanding can lead to social disharmony and suffering. By recognizing the interconnected nature of our experiences and cultivating mindfulness, we can work towards greater compassion, ultimately fostering a more harmonious society. In this way, the path of understanding aligns with the cessation of craving, allowing individuals to transcend conflicts and embrace the shared humanity that binds us together.

3.3. The significance of peace in Buddhism

In Buddhism, the significance of peace transcends the mere absence of conflict, embodying a profound state of mental and emotional clarity essential for both individual well-being and societal harmony. Peace is not only a personal aspiration but also a collective goal, reflecting the interconnectedness of all beings. The Pali term *Santi*, which translates to peacefulness, underscores this concept. *Santi* can be divided into *Internal Peace* (*ajjhhattika-santi*) and *External Peace* (*bāhira-santi*). Internal Peace refers to the tranquility within an individual, while External Peace pertains to harmony with others.²² This dual concept highlights the intrinsic link between personal and communal peace. When individuals cultivate Internal Peace through practices like meditation, ethical conduct, and mindfulness, they naturally extend compassion and understanding towards others, fostering External Peace. This seamless integration of internal and external tranquility illustrates how personal well-being can contribute significantly to global harmony. As each attains inner peace, their actions are guided by compassion and wisdom, leading to a ripple effect that promotes a harmonious and cohesive society. Thus, the pursuit of Internal Peace is not a solitary endeavor but a cornerstone for achieving peace within the global community, resonating deeply with the interconnected nature of all beings as taught in Buddhism.

In Buddhism, the ultimate state of attainment is referred to as *anuttaram santivarapadam*²³, which translates to *supreme state of sublime peace*.²⁴ This profound concept encapsulates the pinnacle of spiritual achievement and tranquility. It represents a state where one has completely transcended all forms of suffering, delusions, and attachments, achieving ultimate liberation (*Nibbāna*). This highest peace is not merely an absence of conflict but a profound state of unshakable inner serenity and clarity. It embodies the culmination of the Buddhist path, where one's mind is free from the disturbances of craving and aversion, and is instead filled with compassion, wisdom, and boundless equanimity. Through the realization of *anuttaram santivarapadam*, an individual not only attains personal liberation but also becomes a beacon of peace and harmony in the world, contributing to the collective well-being of all beings.

²² Assist. Prof. Dr. Walmoruwe Piyaratana, (2021), *Essays on Buddhist Studies*, Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre, p. 251.

²³ *Majjhimanikāya*, (1979), edited by Trenckner, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 163.

²⁴ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2001), *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 256.

In the *Sammodamāna Jātaka*,²⁵ the Buddha emphasizes the critical importance of peace and unity over quarrels, advising his relatives to come together rather than engage in conflict (*ñātakānaṃ kalaho nāma na yutto, kalaho vināsamūla eva hoti*: such a thing as a quarrel among kinsfolk is unseemly; quarrelling leads only to destruction). This teaching highlights the principle of interconnectedness among all beings, reminding us that discord not only harms individual relationships but also disrupts the harmony of the broader community. The Buddha advocates for cultivating loving-kindness and compassion, encouraging open-heartedness and understanding to resolve disagreements constructively. He illustrates that a peaceful environment fosters collective well-being, allowing individuals to thrive and support one another in pursuit of common goals. Ultimately, the *Jātaka* serves as a powerful reminder of our moral responsibility to choose peace over conflict, shaping our relationships and communities through empathy and respect.

Buddha consistently urged his followers to cultivate harmony and unity among themselves.

Happy is the arising of awakened ones.
Happy is the teaching of the good doctrine;
Happy is the unity in the Order;
Happy is austerity of those who are united²⁶.

The verse encapsulates this core principle. Peace in Buddhism extends beyond the mere absence of conflict; it represents a harmonious state of being that is essential for both personal fulfillment and the collective well-being of society.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha highlights the concept of tolerance as the highest form of austerity, underscoring the importance of cultivating inner peace and harmony. He teaches that true disciples should embody qualities such as refraining from abuse and violence, thereby promoting a non-harmful way of living. These principles reflect the core of Buddhist ethics, which emphasize compassion, mindfulness, and respect for all sentient beings. By fostering an attitude of tolerance and non-violence, individuals can achieve a profound sense of peace within themselves, which is essential for personal growth and the cultivation of a compassionate society. Ultimately, the Buddha's teachings in the *Dhammapada* guide practitioners towards a life marked by understanding and care for others, reinforcing the idea that inner peace is foundational to spiritual development and harmonious coexistence.

The Buddha's emphasis on the unity and harmony of the *Vajjins* in the *Discourse of Great Passing: The Buddha's Last Days* is a profound testament to his enduring commitment to peace and collective well-being. By appreciating

²⁵ *The Jātaka Together with Its Commentary* Vol I, (1962), edited by V. Fausseboll, Oxford: Pali Text Society, pp. 209 - 210.

²⁶ K. R. Norman, (1997), *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 29.

the Vajjins' practices and encouraging his disciples to adopt them within his monastic order, the Buddha underscored the importance of cohesion and mutual respect. "*Ānanda*, so long as such proper prevision is made, the Vajjians may be expected prosper and not decline."²⁷ This guidance was not only a reflection of his teachings on the interdependence of all beings but also a strategic vision for ensuring the strength and longevity of the *Saṅgha*. Through this directive, the Buddha highlighted that peace and harmony were essential for spiritual growth and societal stability. By advocating for such principles, the Buddha aimed to foster a resilient community that could withstand challenges and support each member in their path to enlightenment. This incident encapsulates his holistic approach to peace, encompassing both individual and communal harmony.

The Dhammapada, a revered collection of the Buddha's sayings, profoundly highlights the path to overcoming enmity through non-hatred.

He abused me, he struck me, he overcame me, he robbed me.

Of those who do not wrap themselves up in it, hatred is quenched.

For not by hatred are hatreds ever quenched here,

But they are quenched by non-hatred. This is the ancient rule²⁸.

This principle echoes the Buddha's teachings on the transformative power of compassion and forgiveness. Rather than responding to hostility with anger, the Buddha advised a path of understanding and kindness. By practicing non-hatred, individuals can break the cycle of retaliation and foster a more harmonious and peaceful existence. This teaching not only applies to personal relationships but also serves as a guiding principle for societal interactions, emphasizing the importance of inner peace in achieving outer harmony. The essence of this wisdom is timeless, reminding us that true strength lies in the ability to transcend enmity with love and compassion.

The Buddha's teachings emphasize that true peace arises from the cultivation of mindfulness, compassion, and the understanding of the impermanent nature of life. By addressing the root causes of suffering, such as ignorance, craving, and attachment, Buddhist practice encourages individuals to foster inner tranquility, which can ripple outward to create a more harmonious society. Ultimately, the pursuit of peace in Buddhism serves as a powerful antidote to the stress and turmoil of modern life, guiding practitioners toward a path of enlightenment and the alleviation of suffering for themselves and others.

3.4. Inner peace as a catalyst for global harmony

From a Buddhist perspective, inner peace is not merely a personal goal but a fundamental catalyst for achieving global harmony. The teachings of the Buddha emphasize that true peace begins within the individual. When a person

²⁷ Maurice Walshe, (1987), *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Dighanikāya, London: Wisdom Publication, p. 232.

²⁸ K. R. Norman, (1997), *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 1.

cultivates a calm and compassionate mind, they naturally radiate positivity and kindness in their interactions with others. This inner tranquility, achieved through practices like meditation and mindfulness, helps to dissolve the seeds of hatred, anger, and ignorance. As individuals transform their inner states, they contribute to a collective shift towards a more peaceful and harmonious world. In essence, the ripple effect of inner peace can create a wave of global harmony, illustrating the profound interconnectedness of all beings as taught in Buddhism. By prioritizing inner peace, we lay the groundwork for a society rooted in understanding, compassion, and mutual respect.

In the *Discourse of Tangle*²⁹ from *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, an essential query is posed by a deity regarding the means of overcoming both internal and external conflicts. The Buddha's response, emphasizing the cultivation of internal ethics, calmness, and insight, provides a profound framework for understanding the interconnectedness of inner and outer peace. This teaching underscores the notion that personal tranquility is foundational to resolving broader societal discord. By fostering internal ethics, individuals align their actions with moral principles, thereby reducing the likelihood of creating or exacerbating external conflicts. The cultivation of calmness, through practices like meditation, enables individuals to approach situations with clarity and equanimity, reducing the reactive tendencies that often fuel conflict. Insight, as cultivated through mindfulness and reflective practices, allows for a deeper understanding of the nature of suffering and the interdependent nature of all beings. This insight fosters compassion and empathy, further mitigating sources of external disharmony. Practically, this discourse can be interpreted as advocating for an inside-out approach to conflict resolution, where the transformation of the self is seen as the most effective strategy for achieving lasting peace and harmony in the external world. Through this lens, the Buddha's teachings offer a holistic model for both personal and societal well-being, highlighting the significance of inner peace as a catalyst for global harmony.

In the many discourses of *Division One, Moralities of the Long Discourses of the Buddha*³⁰, a powerful emphasis is placed on the interrelationship between personal ethics and global harmony. When an individual achieves internal peace, they are naturally inclined to act with compassion towards all beings, embodying the principle of *sabbabhūtahitānukampī* (the care for the well-being of all creatures). This internal tranquility leads to ethical behaviors that extend beyond the individual to affect the broader community positively. For example, when one refrains from taking life, they protect others and contribute to a safer environment. Similarly, when one abstains from stealing, they respect others' property and foster trust within the community. The Buddha's teachings

²⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2000), *The Connected Discourse of the Buddha*, Volume I, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 101.

³⁰ Murice Walshe, (1987), *Thus Have I Heard. The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, Dīghanikāya, London: Wisdom Publication.

illustrate that by safeguarding oneself through ethical conduct, one inherently safeguards others, thereby fostering an environment of mutual respect and harmony. Thus, the pursuit of personal virtue is not an isolated endeavor but a foundational element that underpins societal harmony and peace. This interconnectedness between individual ethics and collective well-being underscores the profound impact that personal transformation can have on the world, reflecting the Buddha's vision of a harmonious society built on the pillars of compassion and ethical behavior.

In Buddhism, a person who nurtures calmness and inner peace effectively eliminates any possibility of engaging in conflict with others (Friend, I assert and proclaim (my teaching) in such a way that one does not quarrel with anyone in the world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, in this generation with its recluses and Brahmins, its princes and its people,³¹). By maintaining a serene mind, they inherently prevent any situations that could lead to discord, thereby living harmoniously with their surroundings. This state of serenity and clarity allows them to respond to situations with compassion and understanding rather than anger or aggression. Inner peace acts as a foundation for outward peacefulness, creating a harmonious environment. When an individual is at peace within themselves, their actions and interactions naturally reflect this tranquility, fostering positive relationships and reducing the potential for discord. This principle highlights the profound impact of personal transformation on the broader social fabric, illustrating how inner peace can contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful world.

It is taught in Buddhist teachings that an individual's calmness and inner peace have the power to regulate and control immoral mental states, such as anger, which often lead to conflict. When a person cultivates a serene and composed mind, they are better equipped to manage their emotions and reactions. This inner calmness acts as a buffer, preventing anger from escalating into conflict and thereby promoting harmonious interactions. Essentially, by maintaining inner tranquility, a person diminishes the likelihood of conflict and creates a more peaceful environment both internally and externally.

The wise are restrained in body, and restrained in speech, the wise are restrained in mind. They indeed are well restrained.³²

In his influential work, the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa provides a powerful and essential definition of morality with the phrase *silam ti sitalam*³³ which translates to English as "the meaning of virtue is the meaning of cool".³⁴ This

³¹ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2001), *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, Revised Edition, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 201.

³² K. R. Norman, (1997), *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 35.

³³ *The Visuddhi - Magga of Buddhaghosa*, (1975), Edited by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 8.

³⁴ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (2010), *The Path of Purification*, 4th Edition, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 19.

metaphor beautifully encapsulates the transformative power of ethical conduct in extinguishing the fires of conflict and turmoil that often rage within us. In our daily lives, we are frequently engulfed by various forms of inner and outer conflicts, be it anger, greed, or hatred. These conflicts can be likened to a burning state that disturbs our mental peace and harmony. However, by diligently practicing virtues and adhering to moral principles, we can cool these flames, restoring a sense of calm and balance. This practice not only promotes internal serenity but also fosters peaceful coexistence with others, illustrating how personal virtue is foundational to achieving broader societal harmony. Buddhaghosa's analogy underscores the profound impact of morality in mitigating conflict and enhancing the quality of both individual and collective life.

The Buddhist concept of interconnectedness emphasizes the profound relationship between individual actions and societal well-being. This idea is encapsulated in the teaching: Protecting oneself, one protects others; protecting others, one protects oneself.³⁵ This principle suggests that the practices we cultivate within ourselves, such as mindfulness, ethical conduct, and compassion, directly influence the well-being of others. Conversely, actions that promote the welfare of others also contribute to our peace and happiness.

This reciprocal dynamic can be seen as a co-practice, where individual and collective well-being are mutually reinforcing. When one practices virtues like non-harming and generosity, they not only cultivate inner peace but also create a safer and more harmonious environment for others. This, in turn, reduces the sources of conflict and suffering in society.

By understanding and embracing this interconnectedness, we can see how personal development is not a solitary endeavor but a contribution to global harmony. As more individuals commit to ethical and compassionate living, the ripple effects can lead to a more peaceful and cohesive world. The collective practice of these principles fosters a culture of mutual respect and support, essential for sustainable global peace. Thus, the Buddhist teaching of interconnectedness serves as a powerful reminder that true societal harmony begins with the transformation of the self.

Thus, the Buddhist teachings on inner peace and interconnectedness offer a profound framework for achieving global harmony. By cultivating inner tranquility through ethical conduct, meditation, and mindfulness, individuals not only transform their own lives but also positively impact those around them. This inner calmness effectively controls negative mental states, such as anger, preventing conflict and promoting harmonious interactions. As Buddhaghosa's metaphor of *silam ti sitalam* illustrates, virtues cool the burning states of conflict within us, fostering both personal and societal peace. The interdependent nature of individual and collective well-being underscores that true societal harmony begins with the transformation of the self. By prioritizing inner peace, individuals contribute to a ripple effect that can lead to a more

³⁵ Nyānaponika Thera, (2010), *Protection Through Satipaṭṭhāna*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 5.

compassionate, understanding, and respectful global community, embodying the vision of a harmonious society as taught by the Buddha.

3.5. Buddhist discipline for inner-peace and global harmony

The Three-fold Trainings (*Tisikkhā*), as instructed by the Buddha, play a crucial role in creating both inner peace and global harmony. These three fundamental aspects: morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and insight or wisdom (*paññā*) provide a comprehensive framework for overcoming internal and external conflicts. As highlighted in the *Discourse of Tangle*, the Buddha emphasized that cultivating these three elements is the key to resolving personal and societal discord.

A man established on virtues, wise'
Developing the mind and wisdom.
A bhikkhu ardent and discreet:
He can disentangle this tangle.³⁶

Morality (*Sīla*): This involves adhering to ethical conduct, which helps in establishing a foundation of trust and respect. By practicing virtues like non-harming, truthfulness, and generosity, individuals contribute to a more harmonious and ethical society.

Concentration (*Samādhi*): Through the practice of tranquility, individuals can develop a calm and focused mind. This state of mental clarity allows for better emotional regulation, reducing the likelihood of reactive and conflictual behavior.

Insight or Wisdom (*Paññā*): Insight involves a deep understanding of the nature of reality, particularly the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things. This wisdom fosters compassion and empathy, as it helps individuals see beyond their ego and recognize the shared experiences of others.

By integrating these three aspects into daily life, individuals can achieve a state of inner tranquility that naturally extends to their interactions with others, promoting a peaceful and harmonious global society. The Three-fold Trainings thus serve as a holistic approach to personal transformation and societal well-being, embodying the Buddha's vision for a world rooted in understanding, compassion, and ethical conduct.

Buddhist teachings on *non-violence* highlight the profound connection between cultivating inner peace and fostering peace with others. This principle is grounded in the practices of compassion and mindfulness, which are essential for harmonious interactions within our communities. By nurturing a compassionate heart and a mindful presence, individuals can transcend personal conflicts and extend kindness and understanding to those around them. These practices help to dissolve feelings of anger, hatred, and ignorance, replacing them with empathy and love. As a result, the cultivation of inner

³⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2000), *The Connected Discourse of the Buddha*, Volume I, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 101.

peace naturally leads to actions that promote non-violence and harmony, contributing to a more peaceful and cohesive society. This interconnected approach underscores the Buddha's vision of a world where personal transformation leads to collective well-being and global peace.

In the *Dhammapada*, particularly in the group of verses related to *Dandavagga* (The violence), the Buddha provides profound guidance on non-violence. He encourages individuals to see others as themselves, understanding that just as one desires happiness and well-being, so do others.

All tremble at violence; to all life is dear.

Comparing (others) with oneself, one should not kill or cause to kill.

Whoever does not injure with violence creatures desiring happiness, seeking his happiness, he gains happiness when he has passed away.³⁷

By recognizing this shared aspiration for happiness, one develops empathy and compassion, leading to the natural abstention from violent actions. This teaching emphasizes the importance of seeing the common humanity in all beings and treating them with the same care and consideration we wish for ourselves. By cultivating this mindset, individuals can foster inner peace and contribute to a more harmonious and non-violent society.

The Buddha's commitment to non-violence and the preservation of life is a fundamental aspect of his teachings, reflected in many discourses of the *Long Discourses of the Buddha-Dīgha Nikāya*.³⁸ He exemplified this principle by refraining from the destruction of any living beings and instructed his followers to do the same. This emphasis on non-violence, or *ahiṃsā*, is deeply rooted in the understanding that all life is interconnected and that causing harm to any being ultimately disrupts the harmony of the whole. By fostering a mindset of compassion and respect for all forms of life, the Buddha aimed to create a foundation for inner peace and societal harmony. This principle not only guides individual conduct but also serves as a cornerstone for building a peaceful and ethical community, illustrating the profound impact of personal virtue on the broader social fabric.

Mindfulness (*sati*), while primarily aimed at achieving final liberation in Buddhist practice

(There is, monks, this one way to the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for the gaining of right path, for the realization of Nibbāna, that is to say the four foundations of mindfulness³⁹), has significant applications in addressing contemporary issues such as global disharmony.

³⁷ K. R. Norman, (1997), *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 20.

³⁸ Murice Walshe, (1987), *Thus Have I Heard. The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Dīghanikāya*, London: Wisdom Publication. pp. 335 - 350.

³⁹ Murice Walshe, (1987), *Thus Have I Heard. The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Dīghanikāya*, London: Wisdom Publication, p. 335.

The teaching that “whatever streams there are in the world, their restraint is mindfulness”⁴⁰ underscores its vital role in maintaining balance and preventing conflicts.

At its core, mindfulness involves being fully present and aware of one’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. This practice cultivates a deep sense of self-awareness and self-regulation, enabling individuals to respond to situations with clarity and equanimity rather than impulsiveness or aggression. By fostering a calm and composed mind, mindfulness helps to dissolve internal conflicts and emotional turmoil, leading to greater inner peace. This inner tranquility is the foundation upon which ethical conduct and compassionate interactions are built.

The ripple effects of mindfulness extend far beyond the individual. When individuals practice mindfulness, they become more aware of the consequences of their actions on others. This heightened awareness promotes ethical behavior, empathy, and compassion. By being present and attentive in their interactions, mindful individuals contribute to a culture of understanding and respect. This, in turn, helps to reduce misunderstandings, prejudices, and conflicts at a societal level. The collective practice of mindfulness fosters a more harmonious and cohesive community, as individuals are better equipped to handle differences and resolve disputes peacefully.

Moreover, mindfulness encourages a deeper appreciation of the interconnectedness of all beings. By recognizing that our actions impact not only ourselves but also those around us, we are more likely to act in ways that promote the well-being of the entire global community. This holistic approach to mindfulness aligns with the Buddhist view of caring for the well-being of all creatures.

In essence, mindfulness serves as a powerful tool for both personal and global transformation. It helps individuals attain inner peace by regulating their thoughts and emotions, and it extends this peace outward by fostering compassionate and ethical behavior that contributes to global harmony. Thus, the practice of mindfulness bridges the gap between personal liberation and societal well-being, illustrating the profound interconnectedness of all aspects of life.

As stated in the *Discourse of Great Forty*, the essence of the interconnection between right effort, right mindfulness, and right view circling right action is deeply relevant to the discussion of inner peace and global harmony. In Buddhism, the cultivation of these three qualities forms a comprehensive approach to ethical living and personal transformation, which in turn fosters a peaceful and harmonious society. The discourse states thus;

One makes an effort to abandon wrong intention and to enter upon right intention: this is one’s right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong intention, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right intention: this is

⁴⁰K. R. Norman, (1992), *The Group of Discourses*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, p. 116.

one's right mindfulness. Thus, three states run and circle right intention, that is right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.⁴¹

Right Effort involves the proactive cultivation of wholesome states of mind and the diligent effort to abandon unwholesome actions. It is about striving to purify one's mind, to let go of negative emotions such as anger and hatred, and to develop positive qualities like compassion and kindness. This continuous effort is essential for personal growth and for maintaining a state of inner peace.

Right Mindfulness is the practice of being fully aware and present in each moment. It involves observing one's thoughts, emotions, and actions with clarity and without judgment. By being mindful, individuals can recognize when they are engaging in harmful behaviors and make conscious choices to abandon them, while also fostering positive and constructive actions. Mindfulness helps in maintaining mental clarity and emotional balance, which are crucial for both personal tranquility and harmonious interactions with others.

Right View encompasses the understanding of the true nature of reality, including the recognition of the interconnectedness of all beings and the impermanence of all things. This understanding cultivates wisdom and compassion, guiding individuals to act ethically and with empathy towards others.

When these three qualities, right effort, right mindfulness, and right view are harmonized, they naturally lead to right action. Right action refers to ethical conduct that avoids causing harm and promotes the well-being of oneself and others. It includes actions such as refraining from violence, theft, and deceit, and instead practicing generosity, honesty, and compassion.

By cultivating these qualities, individuals create a foundation for inner peace, as they align their thoughts, words, and deeds with ethical principles. This personal transformation has a ripple effect, contributing to a more harmonious and peaceful society. As each person works towards inner peace through right effort, right mindfulness, and right view, their actions reflect this inner tranquility, fostering global harmony. Thus, the integration of these Buddhist teachings offers a holistic path to achieving both personal and societal well-being.

The Buddhist teaching on the Righteous Ruler (*Dhammika-rāja*), as highlighted in the discourse of *The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel*,⁴² provides valuable guidance for contemporary political leadership. King Daḥhanemi's example of ruling without resorting to force or violence, but rather through the principles of righteousness and law, underscores the importance of ethical governance. In this discourse, the Buddha emphasizes that a ruler

⁴¹ Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2001), *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, Revised Edition, USA: Wisdom Publication, p. 937.

⁴² Murice Walshe, (1987), *Dīghanikāya*, London: Wisdom Publication, p. 396. *Thus Have I Heard. The Long Discourses of the Buddha*.

should govern with compassion, wisdom, and justice, prioritizing the welfare of the people over personal power and ambition.

In today's society, where political leaders often struggle for power, this teaching serves as a poignant reminder of the core values that should guide leadership. By ruling with integrity and compassion, leaders can foster peace, stability, and prosperity, not only within their own countries but also in the global community. This approach aligns with the broader Buddhist principles of non-violence, ethical conduct, and the interconnectedness of all beings, highlighting how personal virtue and ethical leadership can contribute to global harmony. The example of the righteous ruler is a timeless lesson in the importance of upholding human values and ethical governance in creating a just and peaceful society.

IV. CONCLUSION

The teachings of Buddhism offer profound insights into the nature of inner peace and its significance as a catalyst for global harmony. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, the cultivation of inner tranquility becomes imperative, not only for personal well-being but also for the collective health of society. By recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings, we can appreciate how individual actions, grounded in compassion and mindfulness, contribute to a more peaceful world.

The challenges we face in contemporary society, ranging from social injustices and environmental crises to the breakdown of communication, emphasize the urgency of fostering both inner and outer peace. By addressing the root causes of disharmony, such as greed, hatred, and delusion, we can pave the way for a more harmonious existence. The Buddhist principles of tolerance, understanding, and compassion serve as guiding lights in this endeavor, encouraging a shift towards positive peace that encompasses social justice and equity.

In summary, inner peace is not merely a personal pursuit; it is a necessity for creating a world where understanding and respect prevail. As individuals embark on their journeys towards inner tranquility, they contribute to a ripple effect that promotes global harmony. The teachings of Buddhism illuminate the path forward, reminding us that by cultivating peace within ourselves, we can collectively strive for a more just, compassionate, and harmonious world. The vision for a future marked by peace is not an unattainable ideal but a shared responsibility that requires our commitment to understanding, compassion, and cooperation, principles deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy. Through these teachings, we find hope and direction in our quest for a peaceful coexistence that honors the dignity and richness of all cultures and communities.

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BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE FOR ATTAINING WORLD PEACE IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

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Abstract:

Every living being wants peace, not suffering, in this world. With this desire, they make regular efforts to avoid pain in their daily lives. We continuously work hard to acquire substantial possessions, such as prosperity, respect, power, and recognition, and to enjoy sensual pleasures. But when we experience the reality of nature, we realize that everything is impermanent. With this perspective, the Buddha enlightened humanity to recognize this reality and live a peaceful life.

The Buddha was the sage who understood this world and its nature and shared the true meaning of a peaceful life at the age of 35 when he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya (Bihar) after great penance and self-mortification. When he was Siddhattha, he enjoyed royal life and was far from the reality of existence. However, when he went outside the palace, he saw four significant sights – disease, old age, death, and a saint – which had a profound impact on his mind. Immediately, he renounced his luxurious life and chose the path of sainthood to free himself from material pleasures and to understand the reality of suffering, i.e., its causes.

After great penance and unwavering determination, he finally discovered the truth of life, which he shared after attaining enlightenment. He disseminated this truth to all the ascetics of that time along with their disciples. The Buddha's discourses emphasized that excessive attachment to material wealth and sensual pleasures leads to suffering, distress, and anxiety rather than true happiness. Without ego, lust, greed, and enmity, peace can be attained.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore how the Buddha's philosophy has inspired the world and cultivated inner values. What are the basic teachings that the Buddha urged the common person to imbibe and practice?

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How do meditation techniques help us overcome unnecessary desires and guide us in the right direction? How can we contribute Buddhist virtues at both national and global levels by disseminating the Buddha's message of peace?

Keywords: *morality, enlightenment, mindfulness, peace, virtues, wisdom.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Every human being in this world desires peace, not suffering. With this desire, one exerts to the best of one's ability to avoid suffering daily. We constantly work hard to acquire material possessions, such as wealth, honor, power, and fame, and to enjoy sensual pleasures, with the perspective that material possessions and sensual pleasures will bring us permanent happiness. However, this is a complete misconception, as the Buddha taught.

The Buddha was the sage who understood the meaning of a peaceful life at the age of 35 when he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya (Bihar) after great penance and self-mortification. When he was Siddhattha, he enjoyed a royal life and was unaware of the reality of existence. However, when he went outside the palace and saw four significant sights - disease, old age, death, and a saint - he was deeply moved. Immediately, he renounced his luxurious life and chose the path of sainthood to free himself from material pleasures and to understand the causes of suffering.

Regarding peace, the Buddha's teachings emphasize that excessive attachment to material wealth and sensual pleasures leads to suffering, distress, and anxiety rather than true happiness. Peace can only be attained through the practice of moral and ethical conduct. Without lust, greed, and excessive self-centeredness, one can achieve peace. The Buddha also highlighted that peace arises through the practice of moral principles and spiritual development, not through material gains.

Furthermore, the Buddha recognized that human beings possess the power of thinking and reasoning. Therefore, whatever we think, speak, or do physically originates from a thought determined at the level of the mind. The mind is a cognitive function that includes consciousness, perception, thinking, judgment, and memory. It is usually defined as the faculty of an entity's thoughts and consciousness. It holds the power of imagination, recognition, and appreciation and is responsible for processing feelings and emotions, which result in attitudes and actions. The Buddha explicitly revealed that the mind is the forerunner of all *Dhammas*: "*Manopubbaṅgamā dhamma Manoseṭṭha manomayā/Manasā ce paduṭṭhen Bhāsati vā karoti vā/Tato naṃ dukkhamanvet cakkariṃ va vāhato padariṃ*"¹. The mind moves rapidly, and it takes merely a moment to imagine anything and travel anywhere. It can even go beyond the black hole within a second. Even during reflection, the mind, in a flash, decides what to do. This is the reason the Buddha further states that a resolution made

¹ *Dhammapada*, Narada Thera (trans), Taipei, Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, p. 1.

at the level of the mind is the origin of action. We give different expressions to these resolutions through thoughts, speech, or physical actions.

Let us explain how the mind acts: When we see an object with our respective sense organs, a thought is created in the mind, and that thought may be moral or immoral. Now, the question arises: what is moral, and what is immoral? Do our actions have any reasons or roots? Is there any background to a particular action? To classify different types of actions, the Buddha revealed and enumerated three types of roots: *kusalamūla*, *akusalamūla*, and neither *kusalamūla* nor *akusalamūla*. "If a thought or action has moral roots in its background, then that thought or action is identified as moral." It can be mentioned here that *alobha* (non-attachment or generosity), *adosa* (goodwill or friendliness), and *amoha* (proper understanding or wisdom) are moral roots (*kusalamūla*).

On the other hand, immoral roots (*akusalamūla*) are *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (Skt. *dveṣa* - ill will, enmity, jealousy, hatred), and *moha* (improper or wrong understanding, misunderstanding, ignorance, etc.). Because of these qualities, the mind has been given utmost emphasis in one's life to attain stability both within and without. The Buddha holds that the mind is responsible for all actions – good as well as bad, moral as well as immoral, selfish or selfless, and so on. Regarding purity of mind, the Buddha speaks of the need for mental purification, which can be achieved through the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. The essence of all the Buddha's teachings can be expressed as abstaining from committing immoral actions: "*Sabbapapasaakaranam kusalassaupasampadā/ Sacittapariyodapanam, etanm buddhnāna sāsanaṃ.*"²

Not resorting to immoral and sinful actions, following the path of morality, and performing virtuous deeds to purify one's character – this is the gift of the Buddha's teachings. Merely listening to the Buddha's words without acting accordingly is meaningless. The Buddha is simply a guide; he does not rescue anyone. One must take action and experience the consequences: "*Tumehi kiccam atappam, akkhataro Tathagata/ Patipanna pamokkhanti, jyaino marabandhana.*"³

The Buddha further states that a person is his own master, and no one else is. Therefore, one must restrain one's senses and act only upon moral deeds. By doing so, one can attain the highest bliss, i.e., *nibbāna*: "*Atta hi attano nātho, ko hi natho paro siya/ Attana hi sudantena, Nātham labhati dullhabham.*"⁴

The *Abhidhamma* enumerates and reveals consciousness (*citta*) and its various mental factors (*cetasika*), which constitute the mind. Mental factors arise and influence the mind, leading it to think and act in different ways.

A person is a unique combination of *citta* and *cetasika*. True followers of

² *Dhammapada*, Daw Mya Tin (trans.), ed. by Editorial Committee, Tipitaka Association (Rangoon, Burma, 1986), p. 159.

³ *Dhp* 276.

⁴ *Dhp* 160.

the Buddha's path must be mindful of negative or destructive mental factors. If these factors are kept under control, the actions performed by individuals bring positive changes, and the results of these actions remain moral.

The Buddha's life serves as a role model for all beings in general and his followers in particular. The *Suttavibhaṅga* contains the Buddha's instructions on what to do and what not to do. All these instructions are rooted in moral principles. A person who adopts the homeless renunciant's life ought to be especially concerned with these moral guidelines.

A disciple must develop mental concentration and cultivate discipline through the training of the mind. *Sīla* (virtue), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom) form the path of mental training, and these are sufficient to control mental impurities or defilements. We should briefly examine *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* one by one.

To attain the stage of mental concentration, it is essential to cultivate moral precepts known as *sīla* (morality). *Sīla* is a moral habit, a virtuous behavior, an ethical practice, and a code of conduct. It is the Buddhist foundation of morality. Without *sīla*, one cannot attain any of the higher stages. *Sīla* is the foundation of mental training. Ethical conduct (*sīla*) is based on love and compassion.

II. CULTIVATION OF *SĪLA*, *SAMĀDHI*, AND *PAÑÑĀ* FOR INNER PEACE

This includes three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, namely, right speech, right action, and right livelihood.

2.1. Right speech (*sammāvācā*)

Right speech means abstaining from lying, backbiting, slander, and any speech that may cause hatred, enmity, disunity, or disharmony among individuals or groups. It also means refraining from harsh words, rude, impolite, malicious, and abusive language, as well as idle, useless, and foolish babble or gossip.

When a disciple abstains from these forms of wrong and harmful speech, he naturally speaks the truth and uses words that are friendly, benevolent, pleasant, gentle, meaningful, and useful. One should not speak carelessly; speech should be timely and appropriate. If one cannot say something useful, one should remain silent.

2.2. Right action (*sammākammanta*)

Right action promotes moral and peaceful conduct. It admonishes us to abstain from destroying life, stealing, dishonest dealings, and illegitimate sexual conduct. One should also encourage others to lead a peaceful and honorable life in the right way.

2.3. Right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*)

Right livelihood means abstaining from making a living through professions that bring harm to others, such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, or engaging in deceitful

practices. One should earn a livelihood that is honorable, blameless, and free from harm to others. It is evident that Buddhism strongly opposes any kind of war, as it condemns the trade in arms and lethal weapons as an evil and unjust means of livelihood.

Sīla (Morality) - Further Division of Sīla: *Sīla* consists of five, eight, and ten precepts. The five precepts (*pañca-sīla*) are closely related to the eight precepts (*aṭṭha-sīla*) and the ten precepts (*dasa-sīla*). The ten precepts (*dasa-sīla*) are as follows: (1) Abstaining from killing, (2) Abstaining from taking what is not given, (3) Abstaining from wrong indulgence in pleasures, (4) Abstaining from lying speech, (5) Abstaining from slander, (6) Abstaining from harsh and rough speech, (7) Abstaining from frivolous chatter, (8) Abstaining from covetousness, (9) Abstaining from malevolence and (10) Abstaining from false or heretical views. The worthy disciple observes all these restraints himself, while one who is even more virtuous, besides observing them personally, also encourages others to do likewise.

Samādhi (concentration): *Samādhi* means fixing the mind, which is in constant flux, on an object of thought without distraction. There are forty methods for calming and stabilizing the mind by concentrating it on a single object of thought. These forty methods may be classified into seven categories: *kasina*, *asubha*, *anussati*, *appamaññā*, *saññā*, *vavatthāna*, and *arūpa*.

(1) **Kasīṇa** means totality or wholeness. This method consists of fixing the mind on one of ten objects, such as earth, water, fire, air, different colors, or a space. When a person perfectly concentrates on any of these objects, his mind becomes so absorbed in it that everything he perceives appears in the form of his meditation object. For example, if a person successfully controls his mind by meditating on water, the entire world appears to him as water.

(2) **Asubha** means unpleasantness or aversion. This method of concentration involves meditating on a corpse in various stages of decomposition, reflecting on its disgusting and impermanent nature to develop detachment from sensual desires.

(3) **Anussati** means recollection or mindfulness. This method consists of making the mind steady through repeated reflection on: The Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha (*Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, *Saṅghānussati*); One's virtuous deeds (*sīlānussati*); The thirty-two parts of the body, such as hair, nails, skin, teeth, and bones (*kāyagatāsati*); The inhalation and exhalation of breath (*ānāpānasati*).

(4) **Appamaññā** means boundlessness. This method of concentration includes: Developing boundless loving-kindness (*mettā*), directing goodwill toward all beings without distinction; Cultivating compassion (*karuṇā*) toward beings in distress; Rejoicing in the happiness of others (*muditā*); Developing equanimity (*upekkhā*), treating all beings with impartiality.

(5) **Saññā** means perception. This method consists of developing mindfulness by contemplating the rottenness and impurities inherent in food and drink while consuming them, to cultivate detachment from cravings.

(6) **Vavatthāna** means analysis. This method involves concentrating on the four great elements (*mahābhūta*), namely: *Pathavī* (earth element – solidity); *Āpo* (water element – cohesion); *Tejo* (fire element – temperature); *Vāyo* (air element – movement). By analyzing these elements, one realizes that the body is not a permanent self but a composition of transient material phenomena.

(7) **Arūpa** refers to formless meditation, a method of deep concentration that enables one to attain the formless realms (*arūpa-brahmaloka*), leading to higher spiritual existence beyond material form. Using one of these methods of meditation, one must fix the mind on an object of thought with unwavering concentration.

Paññā (Wisdom): *Paññā* means wisdom or right view. Two factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, namely right thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*) refer to thoughts of selfless renunciation or detachment, thoughts of love, and thoughts of non-violence. And right understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), is the understanding of things as they truly are.

There are several objects of thought upon which the mind should be concentrated to develop the right view. Once right understanding is attained, a person will no longer have doubts or misgivings about the truth of this concept. The only way to gain right view is through the actual practice of the Buddha's teachings.

The cultivation of *paññā* requires a dedicated commitment to closely and faithfully following the Buddha's instructions while exerting the right effort with perseverance. This process involves two essential aspects: concentrating the mind on an object of thought and maintaining constant awareness of it. Through sustained focus and mindful observation, wisdom gradually develops, allowing one to perceive reality more clearly. Without diligence and steadfast effort, the mind remains scattered, hindering true understanding. Thus, the path to *paññā* necessitates both disciplined practice and unwavering adherence to the Buddha's teachings, fostering deep insight and liberation.

Thus, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are essential for mental training. These three pillars of Buddhist practice must be cultivated and developed through continuous practice by a dedicated Buddhist practitioner. "*Morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā) are essential to achieve the ultimate goal – nibbāna.*"⁵ According to the Buddha, it is a man's mind, not his enemy, that lures him into evil ways. We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMAN BEING

The Buddha says that human beings and nature are vital to each other. It is humanity's responsibility to sustain and enhance the natural environment with an attitude of respect and protection toward the nature around us. We need to

⁵ Narada Maha Thera, *The Buddha and His Teaching* (Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre), p. 54.

understand that nature is more powerful than humans, and that humans have no existence without nature. Nature can exist without humans, but humans cannot exist without nature - this is a universal law.

Regarding the relationship between humans and nature, one must adopt a positive approach toward the conservation of natural phenomena and biodiversity - all the different forms of life found in our surroundings, including animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that constitute our natural world. Each of these species functions within ecosystems, forming an intricate web that maintains balance and supports life. Nature is often taken for granted, yet it is an essential part of human survival. When people refer to nature, they mean the natural world and everything within it.

As far as plants are concerned, the Sanskrit-Tibetan version of the Jīvaka story describes Jīvaka as a specialist in *kapāla-mocana* (skull opening surgery).⁶ After seven years of medical training, he asked his teacher whether he had completed his course. His teacher instructed him to search within a one-yojana radius of Takkaśilā and find a plant without medicinal value. Jīvaka diligently searched but failed to find any such plant. He then reported back to his teacher, who confirmed that he had completed his medical course. This story highlights the fact that every plant possesses medicinal properties.

As we all know, Earth is home to millions of living beings, and among these, the most intellectually advanced species is humans. However, it is ironic that humans - who are considered superior - are primarily responsible for harming and polluting the environment. Environmental degradation is evident in deforestation for urban expansion, industrialization, and infrastructure development. This happens everywhere, and we are all witnesses to this destruction, yet many choose to overlook it simply because it does not directly affect them.

Deforestation leads to air pollution and reduced rainfall, which negatively impacts both human health and agricultural productivity. In *Pāli* literature, the destruction of living plants (*bhūtagāma*) is to be confessed (*pāṭidesaniya*).⁷ The *Pāli* term *bhūtagāma* means “the dwelling place of living beings.” In monastic discipline, harming plants is considered a violation for monks and nuns.

IV. CULTIVATION OF THE FOUR BRAHMAVIHĀRAS AND WORLD PEACE

Regarding world peace, harmony among individuals, groups, or nations is not possible without goodwill toward one another. True goodwill, in turn, cannot be achieved without understanding the traditions and principles of other religions at a global level. The Buddha’s teachings are characterized by universal love, unhindered kindness (*mettā*), patience, and tolerance toward all beings.

⁶ Nilanaksha Dutta, D.M. Bhattacharya, and Shiv Nath (eds.), *Gilgit Manuscript*, Vol. 3, Part 2 (Ciravastu, Calcutta, 1942), pp. 25 - 26, cited in Sukla Dass, “Situating Jivaka in History,” in *Medieval Heritage of India: An Anthropology* (Kolkata: Mahabodhi Book Agency, 2014).

⁷ *Paccittiya*, Chapter Two, *Bhūtagāma*.

According to the Buddha Dhamma, world peace is only possible through developing four essential virtues, known as the Four *Brahmavihāras*.

4.1. *Mettā* (Loving-kindness)

Mettā transcends all boundaries of caste, race, nation, religion, political affiliation, professional identity, and any other divisive consideration. Who is it that divides humanity into different groups? *Mettā* is extended to all without discrimination, without distinction between friend and foe, and differentiation between love and hate.

In the words of *Nārada Thera*, “Just as the sun sheds its rays on all without distinction, so too does sublime *mettā* bestow its sweet blessings equally – on the pleasant and unpleasant, on the high and low, on the virtuous and the wicked, on men and women, and humans and animals alike.”

4.2. *Karuṇā* (Compassion)

Karuṇā is the second *Brahmavihāra*, which, when cultivated, refines and elevates human character, making one gentle, free from hard-heartedness and cruelty. It is defined as the quality that moves a person upon seeing others in distress. A compassionate person does not wish to inflict suffering on others; his heart melts at the sight of suffering, and he seeks to remove it. The Buddha states in the *Mettā Sutta*: “Just as a mother, as long as she lives, cares for her only child, so should one cultivate boundless love for all living beings.”⁸

A person who embodies *karuṇā* makes every effort to alleviate the suffering of others, even at personal cost, without regard for his comfort or convenience. He acts selflessly, with no expectation of reward. *Karuṇā* is synonymous with *ahimsā* (non-injury, mercy, friendliness, and love). A person endowed with this noble quality actively combats suffering and strives to eradicate it.

The characteristic of *karuṇā* is to remove the suffering of others. Its function is not to tolerate others’ suffering, its manifestation is in *ahimsā*, and its immediate cause is the helplessness of those in distress. Furthermore, *karuṇā* is opposed to cruelty and hard-heartedness. Many in this world desperately need compassion - the physically ill and the mentally sick; the poor and downtrodden, who live in abject poverty; the illiterate, who do not understand their rights or how to improve their condition; the servants who are mistreated and denied justice; the women who are regarded as second-class citizens; the elderly, who their children neglect; the beggars, who are forced to beg for survival.

Without *karuṇā*, how can we establish charitable hospitals to treat the sick? Compassion drives altruistic action. It is because of this sublime virtue that many compassionate individuals are engaged in social service, working to aid the poor and needy. This socially engaged Buddhism is highly relevant in the present age.

⁸ Sn 1.8: “*Mata yatha niya puttam Ayusa ekaputtamanurakkhe, / Evampi sabbabhutesu Manasam bhavaye aparimanam*”, p. 36.

The Buddha, in his great compassion, always looked after the poor, the ignorant, and the oppressed, helping them improve their lives. The Buddha himself served the sick and encouraged his disciples to care for the ill and suffering.

4.3. *Muditā* (Sympathetic Joy)

Muditā is the third sublime virtue, meaning sympathetic joy. It is not merely passive sympathy, which in most cases is detached or indifferent, but rather an active state of mind that destroys jealousy. *Muditā*, therefore, is the antidote to jealousy.

Nārada Thera states the following about jealousy: “One devastating force that endangers our whole constitution is jealousy. Very often, some people cannot bear to see or hear about the success of others. They rejoice in others’ failures but cannot tolerate their achievements. Instead of praising and congratulating the successful, they try to ruin, condemn, and vilify them.”

In one sense, *muditā* is more concerned with ourselves than with others, as it helps eradicate jealousy, which is ultimately self-destructive. However, it also benefits others, since one who practices *muditā* does not hinder the progress and welfare of others. It is easy to rejoice in the success of one’s loved ones, but it is extremely difficult to feel genuine happiness at the success of one’s rivals or enemies. This makes *muditā* one of the most difficult virtues to practice, even more challenging than *mettā* and *karuṇā*.

When *muditā* is practiced sincerely, it fosters a spirit of genuine joy in the success and well-being of others, dissolving envy and division. If the poor can rejoice in the wealth of the rich, if developing nations can celebrate the progress of more advanced ones, and if people of one faith can appreciate the devotion of those following another, then *muditā* becomes a powerful force for unity. This selfless joy creates an atmosphere of harmony, reducing conflict and fostering goodwill among individuals and communities. By embracing *muditā*, the world can be transformed into a place of mutual respect, peace, and collective happiness.

4.4. *Upekkhā* (Equanimity)

Upekkhā is a great quality that eliminates attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dosa*). Its chief characteristic is impartiality – a balanced mind that does not discriminate between good and bad, between the virtuous and the sinful. If this sublime and ennobling virtue is cultivated, a person will truly become a noble and elevated being.

Upekkhā is likened to the earth, which remains indifferent under all circumstances. Whether something fragrant or foul is thrown upon it, the earth does not react – it remains undisturbed, impartial, and equanimous. A person who practices *upekkhā* should cultivate a mind like the earth – unshaken and unbiased.

V. MAJOR CAUSES OF SUFFERING

Three major causes prevent us from attaining peace: Greed (*Lobha*), Hatred

(*Dosa*), and Delusion (*Moha*). These are called poisons because they destroy us both physically and mentally. Among them, hatred⁹ is the most destructive, as it fuels conflict, suffering, and disharmony. While a mind driven by greed may experience fleeting pleasure (*somanassa*), and a mind clouded by delusion falls into ignorance and confusion, a mind consumed by hatred leads only to pain and destruction. As the Buddha wisely states, “When anger possesses a man, he looks ugly and lives in pain.”¹⁰ Thus, overcoming these poisons, especially hatred, is essential for attaining inner peace and lasting happiness.

5.1. Buddhist way to prevent the poisoning of hatred

The Buddha said that there is only one remedy that can prevent us from this poison—loving-kindness (*mettā*). “Whatever living beings there may be – feeble or strong, tall, medium, or small, without exception; seen or unseen; those dwelling far or near; those who are born and those yet to be born—may all beings be happy.” Again, the Buddha speaks of loving-kindness: “Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so, let one cultivate a boundless heart of compassion towards all beings.”

5.2. Desire for unlimited wealth

Adequate wealth is necessary for leading a happy and stable life. As a religious teacher, the Buddha never glorified poverty. It is mentioned in the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta*: “When poverty increases, stealing increases; when stealing increases, violence increases; when violence increases, weapons increase.”

Buddhists believe that the Buddha’s teachings serve three fundamental purposes, each leading to greater well-being and liberation. First, they aim to promote human welfare in this life by cultivating ethical conduct, wisdom, and mental discipline. Second, they help beings attain a favorable rebirth in the next life through wholesome actions and spiritual development. Ultimately, the teachings guide individuals toward the highest goal - *nibbāna*, the complete cessation of suffering. By following the Buddha’s path, one moves progressively from worldly well-being to spiritual fulfillment, culminating in the ultimate liberation from the cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*).

The general guideline given by the Buddha to fulfil those three objectives is: to avoid all bad deeds, to cultivate all good deeds, and to purify the mind.¹¹ To fulfil the first aim dealt with establishing well-being and happiness in the immediate sphere of human life here and now, Buddhism provides ethical guidance that encourages individuals to live honestly, righteously, and harmoniously with themselves and others. By fulfilling one’s duties and responsibilities while cultivating patience and understanding, one can overcome the irritation and bitterness that lead to conflict and suffering. The Buddha emphasized that

⁹ Professor Y. Karunadass, *Pursuit of Happiness: Buddhist Way* (Public Lecture, University of Hong Kong, April 13, 2013), p. 20.

¹⁰ *Āṅguttara Nikāya, Chakkanipāta*, p. 363.

¹¹ *Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Buddha Vagga*, verse 183. “*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā, Sacittapariyodapanam, etaṃ buddhānasāsanam.*”

a virtuous person is distinguished by qualities such as charity (*dāna*), good character, truthfulness (*sacca*), tolerance (*khanti*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), and compassion (*karuṇā*). These virtues not only uphold human dignity but also contribute to a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Furthermore, Buddhism teaches that life is not a single occurrence but a continuous cycle of existence influenced by *karma* - one's willed actions. Rebirth can occur in different realms, ranging from the human and animal worlds to heavenly or infernal realms, depending on the moral quality of one's actions.¹² As the Buddha taught, *karma* determines one's future existence, with intention (*cetanā*) being the driving force behind the cycle of rebirth. Thus, by cultivating virtuous qualities and engaging in wholesome actions, individuals can shape their present and future lives while progressing toward ultimate liberation.¹³

The Buddha categorizes *karma* (actions) into two fundamental ethical types, each shaping an individual's future existence. Good actions (*kusala-kamma*), rooted in generosity, morality, and wisdom, lead to rebirth in higher realms where happiness, beauty, and peace prevail. In contrast, bad actions (*akusala-kamma*), driven by greed, hatred, and delusion, result in rebirth in lower realms characterized by suffering and hardship.

The ethical instructions for the first aim ensure that a person does not fall into states of suffering, such as hell, the animal realm, or the world of spirits, devils, and other unfortunate beings. These teachings also support individuals in attaining a better existence in the next life, which is the second of the three aims in Buddhism.

In this second aim, the Dhamma teaches that morality is not only essential for human happiness in the present life but also shapes one's future destiny. Ultimately, our actions create our heaven and hell. Following ethical principles leads to well-being and happiness in this life and results in a higher rebirth in the next. Conversely, breaking these principles leads to suffering in this life and rebirth in realms of misery.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says as follows: "The evil-doer suffers here and hereafter, he suffers in both the worlds. The thought, Evil have I done, torments him, and he suffers even more when he goes to realms of woe. The doer of good delights here and hereafter, he delights in both worlds. The thought, "Good have I done", delights him, and he delights even more when gone to realms of bliss."¹⁴ However, attaining higher rebirth and happiness in future lives is not the final aim of Buddhism. The Buddha teaches that all

¹² Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom*, p. 12.

¹³ AN, *Chakkanipāṭa*, p. 363. "Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi"

¹⁴ *Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Yamaka Vagga*, verses 17 - 18. "Idha tappati pecca tappati, pāpakāri ubhayattha tappati,/ pāpaṃ me kata"nti tappati, bhiyyo tappati duggatim gato. Idha nandati pecca nandati, katapuñño ubhayattha nandati,/ puññaṃ me kata"nti nandati, bhiyyo nandati sugatim gato."

states of existence within *saṃsāra* (the cycle of rebirths) – even in the highest heavens – lack true worth, as they are temporary and conditioned by suffering for those who cling to them.

According to the Buddha, everything – except for *Nibbāna*, which is unconditioned – is subject to causes and constant change. Every conditioned phenomenon is in flux and impermanent. Even heavenly existence is conditioned and must eventually pass away, leading to continued rebirths and deaths even for celestial beings. Thus, suffering is inevitable and cannot be escaped within *saṃsāra*. The Buddha declares that only *Nibbāna* is unconditioned – a state beyond birth and death, where there is no more suffering. Additionally, the happiness of *Nibbāna* is completely different from worldly happiness, whether in this life or the hereafter. Worldly happiness is temporary and based on material desires, whereas the bliss of *Nibbāna* is noble, transcendent, and everlasting. Thus, one who seeks the highest happiness should strive to attain *Nibbāna*.

The Buddha's teachings center on the Four Noble Truths, which reveal the nature of suffering and the path to its cessation, ultimately leading to *Nibbāna*. The final objective of Buddhism is to attain this state of ultimate liberation, free from the endless cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*). The path to this liberation is the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*), which encompasses right understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. In essence, the Buddha's teachings revolve around ethics and meditation, guiding human beings toward well-being and happiness in this life and the hereafter, liberation from suffering, and complete freedom from the cycle of rebirth. By following this path, one can transcend all conditioned existence and realize the unconditioned peace of *Nibbāna*.

VI. BUDDHIST MEDITATION - A WAY TO CULTIVATE PEACE

Meditation means training the mind. It is a practice in which the practitioner employs techniques such as mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*) to develop attention and awareness, ultimately achieving a mentally clear, emotionally calm, and stable state. Synonyms of meditation include contemplation, reflection, pondering, consideration, concentration, and speculation. However, it is difficult to define meditation precisely, as practices vary across different traditions and even within them.

Meditation is practiced in all major religious traditions, though in different ways. Various schools and styles of meditation exist within Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, as well as in other spiritual traditions. The English word “meditation” is derived from Old French meditation and the Latin verb *meditari*, which means “to think, contemplate, devise, and ponder.” The term meditation was introduced as a translation for Eastern spiritual practices, particularly referred to as *dhyāna* in Hinduism and Buddhism. The word *dhyāna* comes from the Sanskrit root *dhyai*, meaning “to contemplate” or “to meditate.”

In Buddhism, meditation is central to spiritual practice. The Buddha

emphasized meditation as a means to liberation from suffering. To achieve this, he established an ideal path leading to enlightenment, which is freedom from suffering. This path is called the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*), consisting of eight steps that are divided into three major categories: *Sīla* (Virtue), *Samādhi* (meditation), *Paññā* (wisdom)

Further, to attain wisdom (*paññā*) and *Nibbāna*, one must follow the eight steps of this golden path, known as the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*): (1) Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), (2) Right Mental Resolve (*sammā-saṅkappa*), (3) Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*), (4) Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*), (5) Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), (6) Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), (7) Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), (8) Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*).

Among these, Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) is the most crucial, as it serves as the foundation for meditation and inner transformation. It requires a determined and conscious effort to elevate one's mind and moral character. This effort involves giving up bad habits, cultivating new wholesome qualities, guarding against evil tendencies, and strengthening the good qualities already developed.

Meditation is a conscious effort to change the way the mind functions. The *Pāli* word for meditation is “*Bhāvanā*,” which means “to cultivate” or “to develop.”¹⁵

In Buddhism, meditation (*bhāvanā*) is a crucial practice for mental cultivation and spiritual development, consisting of two primary types: Tranquillity Meditation (*Samatha-bhāvanā*) and Insight Meditation (*Vipassanā-bhāvanā*). *Samatha* meditation focuses on calming the mind, achieving deep concentration (*samādhi*), and developing inner peace, while *Vipassanā* meditation fosters wisdom by enabling one to see reality as it truly is, free from delusion.

Tranquillity meditation focuses on developing mental calm and concentration (*samādhi*), is accompanied by three benefits: it gives happiness in the present life, a favourable rebirth in the next existence, and the freedom from mental defilements, which is a prerequisite for attainment of insight. Through *samatha-bhāvanā*, the mind becomes calm and pacified, free from worldly hopes and fears. It is used to control sensual desires, anger, worries, and other negative mental states, ultimately bringing peace and happiness to both the individual and the world.

Insight meditation is associated with the realization of the three universal characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*): Impermanence (*anicca*), Suffering (*dukkha*), and Non-self (*anattā*). By directly experiencing these three characteristics, one can eliminate egoism and craving (*taṇhā*), which are the roots of suffering. This realization leads to certainty and visible assurance of *Nibbāna*. In *vipassanā-bhāvanā*, the mind, having been established in wisdom, is freed from the cloud

¹⁵ Ven. S. Dhammika, *Good Question, Good Answer*, p. 43.

of ignorance. It becomes like a still, clear pool, completely free from disturbance and agitation, allowing it to reflect reality as it truly is - a reality that remains hidden from ordinary perception due to the restlessness of craving.

VII. CULTIVATION OF MINDFULNESS IN BUDDHISM

In Buddhist literature, mindfulness (*sati*) is cultivated through four foundations of mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*): Contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), Contemplation of feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), Contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā*), Contemplation of Dhamma (*dhammānupassanā*). Through these four contemplations, one can develop mindful meditation, ultimately attaining concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).

7.1. Contemplation of the Body (*Kāyānupassanā*)

Mindfulness of the body involves: Focusing on the in-and-out breath (*ānāpānasati*): Observing physical movements, such as eating, bending, walking, and talking: Reflection on the repulsiveness of the body, considering its components (hair, nails, teeth, skin, etc.): Reflection on material elements - understanding that the body consists of the four great elements (*mahābhūta*): Earth (*paṭhavī-dhātu*) – Solidity, Water (*āpo-dhātu*) – Fluidity; Fire (*tejo-dhātu*) – Heat, Wind (*vāyo-dhātu*) – Motion and Being mindful of the four postures (Walking, Standing, Sitting, Lying down).

7.2. Contemplation of Feelings (*Vedanānupassanā*)

Mindfulness of feelings (*vedanā*) is a crucial aspect of meditation, involving the observation and contemplation of three types of feelings: pleasant (*sukha-vedanā*), unpleasant (*dukkha-vedanā*), and neutral (*upekkhā-vedanā*). This practice cultivates awareness of how feelings arise and pass away, leading to a direct realization of their impermanent nature (*anicca*). By mindfully observing feelings without attachment to pleasure or aversion to pain, one develops equanimity and insight into the transient nature of all experiences. Through this process, the meditator gradually frees the mind from emotional reactivity, fostering inner balance and deepening wisdom on the path to liberation.

7.3. Contemplation on Mind

At this stage, the disciple observes the mind directly, examining its states and tendencies. The focus is on the three unwholesome roots (*akusala-mūla*): Greed (*lobha*), Hatred (*dosa*), Delusion (*moha*). Through mindfulness of mental states, one becomes aware of the shifting nature of the mind, distinguishing between a greedy mind and a non-greedy mind, a hateful mind and a non-hateful mind, and a deluded mind and a non-deluded mind. By observing these states without attachment or judgment, one gains deeper insight into the workings of the mind, recognizing how unwholesome thoughts arise and fade.

7.4. Contemplation of Dhamma (*Dhammānupassanā*)

After understanding the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*), observing the Five Hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇāni*) as they arise, sense desire (*kāmacchanda*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*), laziness and inactivity (*thīna-middha*),

restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), doubt (*vicikicchā*) Understanding the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*), which constitute human experience: Form (*rūpa*), Feeling (*vedanā*), Perception (*saññā*), Mental formations (*saṅkhāra*), Consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Understanding the Six Sense Bases (*salāyatana*) and their role in perception. And knowing the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*satta bojjhaṅgā*), which support spiritual awakening: Mindfulness (*sati*), Investigation of Dhamma (*dhammavicaya*), Effort (*virīya*), Joy (*pīti*), Tranquility (*passaddhi*), Concentration (*samādhi*) Equanimity (*upekkhā*).¹⁶

VIII. CONCLUSION

Peace is not possible without understanding the true nature of reality and cultivating Buddhist virtues in practice. The Buddha emphasized the benefits of meditation, highlighting its essential role in both mental and physical well-being. Meditation leads to self-control, purification, and enlightenment. It serves as a guardian for our bodily actions, verbal actions, and mental actions. The true nature of human beings is complex. As humans, we should cultivate wholesome virtues and practice meditation to attain peace. For instance, if we refrain from killing or harming others, we can live without fear or anxiety, and naturally, both our lives and the world will be filled with peace and happiness. However, merely holding Buddhist teachings in the mind as an intellectual belief is insufficient. If not applied in practice, these doctrines have no transformative power. The Buddha's teachings emphasize action over belief, and practice over theory. Simply put, from a Buddhist perspective, one must first cultivate peace at an inner level before striving for peace at the global level. The Buddhist path inspires the development of human values and ethical principles, which are fundamental to achieving true peace and harmony in the world.

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CONTRIBUTION OF BUDDHIST AND WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY TO WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN DIGNITY

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Abstract:

This research endeavors to conduct a comparative analysis of coaching as conceptualized in both Buddhism and Western Psychology, with the ultimate objective of offering guidance for the establishment of a sustainable development for human dignity. Coaching, in essence, is the process of empowering individuals to resolve their challenges, thereby fostering self-awareness and personal growth. It is a developmental practice wherein a coach facilitates a learner - or coachee - in attaining specific personal or professional aspirations through structured training and support. The Buddha possessed an exceptional” ability to employ profound intuitive wisdom in the realm of coaching. His compassionate teachings have played an instrumental role in enabling individuals to realize their aspirations while illuminating the path toward a secure and meaningful existence. Buddhist coaching, however, is not confined solely to the time of the Buddha; rather, His Disciplinary Codes serve as an enduring framework that continues to guide humanity toward a sustainable society. The self-coaching methodology inherent in Buddhism proves to be an invaluable asset for all of mankind. From the perspective of Western Psychology, coaching is deeply rooted in different modes of listening - self-centered, empathetic, and intuitive - each of which facilitates a deeper connection with the minds of individuals facing obstacles in their pursuit of life’s goals. By engaging the four essential faculties - the ear, the eye, the heart, and the mind - a coach can effectively navigate the inner world of the coachee, guiding them toward self-discovery and fulfillment. While there exist both

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congruities and distinctions between the Buddhist and Western Psychological approaches to coaching, this study aims to critically examine them. Through such analysis, it seeks to elucidate the most effective coaching methodologies that can contribute to the cultivation of a truly sustainable global society.

Keywords: *Human dignity, happiness, world peace, Western psychology, Buddhist psychology, development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the intersection between Western psychological coaching and Buddhist psychological coaching, examining their respective methodologies and their potential contributions to fostering a sustainable society. By integrating psychological principles with coaching strategies, the cognitive and emotional faculties of the coachee are refined while simultaneously enhancing the coach's discernment, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complexities of human nature.¹ From the perspective of Western psychology, effective coaching relies on structured listening methodologies, such as deep listening, empathetic listening, and intuitive listening, which serve as essential tools in overcoming mental and emotional barriers.² These techniques, often referenced within Corporate Coach Academy, operate through four key channels:³

- (1) The Ear – interpreting tone and auditory cues,
- (2) The Eye – analyzing non-verbal communication and body language,
- (3) The Heart – attuning to emotional resonance, and
- (4) The Head – identifying underlying psychological challenges, mirroring the iceberg model of emotional needs.

By leveraging these elements, Western psychological coaching seeks to navigate and transform the coachee's inner world, guiding them toward personal and professional fulfillment.

In contrast, Buddhist psychology offers a profound framework for cultivating inner tranquility, clarity, and insight through disciplined meditation and mindfulness (*sati*). Rooted in direct experience rather than theoretical constructs, Buddhist coaching fosters self-awareness and equanimity, essential qualities for emotional resilience.⁴ The Buddha frequently emphasized the transformative power of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*), principles that remain highly relevant in contemporary psychological coaching.⁵ His teachings were meticulously tailored to the needs of those who sought his wisdom, offering a path to psychological well-being and personal

¹ Whitmore (2017): 45.

² Rogers (1995): 112.

³ Goleman (1998): 75.

⁴ Anālayo (2003): 127.

⁵ Thanissaro Bhikkhu (2012): 94.

transformation. Beyond his lifetime, the Suttas and the Disciplinary Codes (*Vinaya*) have continued to serve as a moral and psychological compass, providing enduring guidance for individual and collective well-being.⁶

Both Western psychological coaching and Buddhist coaching offer complementary approaches to cultivating higher consciousness, emotional intelligence, and ethical discernment. By integrating the wisdom traditions of Buddhism with the scientific methodologies of Western psychology, contemporary coaching can be refined and enhanced, making it a more effective tool for personal development and social harmony. This study highlights the enduring relevance of Buddhist psychological coaching, which has flourished for over 2,500 years, and its potential to shape a more conscious and sustainable world.⁷

1.1. What constitutes a sustainable society?

In contemporary socio-economic discourse, the concept of a sustainable society has become a subject of profound significance. Various academic perspectives define such a society as one that is deeply attuned to ecological literacy - an awareness of the intricate natural systems that sustain life on Earth. It is a society that not only comprehends the structural and functional principles governing ecosystems but also integrates these insights into the development of sustainable human settlements.⁸ Beyond ecological awareness, a sustainable society is fundamentally rooted in environmental consciousness, the principles of nonviolence (*ahimsā*), and the pursuit of social justice. It upholds grassroots democracy, mirroring the foundational philosophy of green politics, which envisions a civilization that actively preserves and nurtures planetary ecological balance.⁹ In this sense, sustainability is not merely an aspirational ideal but a dynamic and evolving process - one that requires continuous adaptation to maintain equilibrium across resource management, economic investment, technological progress, and institutional transformation.¹⁰ This equilibrium is vital in ensuring that both present and future generations can meet their needs without compromising the integrity of natural systems. Thus, sustainability extends beyond conservation efforts, embodying a holistic framework of ethical responsibility, long-term resilience, and intergenerational equity.¹¹

1.2. The relevance of this study

The exploration of coaching's efficacy within the domains of both Western and Buddhist psychology, particularly in fostering a sustainable society, holds substantial academic and practical value. Given that coaching serves as a crucial mechanism for learning and development, this study underscores the

⁶ Bodhi (2000): 56.

⁷ Harvey (2013): 84.

⁸ Capra & Luisi (2014): 212.

⁹ Dryzek (2013): 78.

¹⁰ Sachs (2015): 94.

¹¹ Rockström et al. (2009): 32.

ways in which its benefits can be strategically incorporated into psychological frameworks to contribute meaningfully to sustainability. Despite the increasing discourse on sustainability, there remains a notable gap in scholarly inquiry regarding the role of coaching within both Western and Buddhist psychological traditions in shaping sustainable societies. Thus, the findings of this research will not only enrich academic understanding but also provide a robust foundation for future scholars seeking to advance this critical field of study.

II. THE ESSENCE OF COACHING: A TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY

As articulated by Wikipedia, coaching is a developmental practice where an individual, known as a coach, facilitates the growth of a learner or client - referred to as the coachee - by offering guidance and structured training to accomplish a specific personal or professional objective. At times, coaching can manifest as an informal relationship in which one person, possessing greater expertise and experience, provides counsel and direction to another. However, coaching is distinct from mentoring in that it concentrates on particular tasks or defined objectives rather than overarching personal or professional development. The Corporate Coach Academy eloquently defines coaching as “a profound learning partnership that empowers individuals to reach their aspirations in the most fulfilling way by heightening self-awareness, thereby cultivating courage, commitment, and capability.”¹²

An attempt to encapsulate coaching in a single, concise definition often proves inadequate, as the concept extends beyond a mere profession into an intricate mechanism for human advancement. Coaching serves as a powerful conduit through which individuals align with their ambitions, harnessing self-awareness to foster resilience, dedication, and competency. For someone burdened with bitterness, the right coaching intervention can unlock boundless potential, transforming limitations into limitless possibilities. Unlike disciplines rooted in theoretical knowledge, coaching derives its efficacy from the inner workings of the individual - their intellect, experiences, and intrinsic aspirations. It is not an external process dictated by the conscious mind but rather an internal odyssey of self-discovery and actualization.

The practice of coaching has been a cornerstone of human performance enhancement for over two centuries, initially flourishing in the realm of sports. In competitive environments, coaching has enabled athletes to unearth hidden reserves of potential, pushing their abilities to unprecedented levels despite the pressures of fierce rivalry. By the late 1990s, however, coaching had expanded far beyond the confines of sports, permeating various domains of life and professional settings. Today, institutions such as the Corporate Coach Academy provide coaching services to individuals from all walks of life, fostering excellence across multiple disciplines.¹³

A truly proficient coach must cultivate emotional intelligence - the

¹² Corporate Coach Academy (2015): 7.

¹³ Corporate Coach Academy (2015): 6.

ability to recognize, regulate, and navigate their own thoughts, emotions, motivations, perceptions, and judgments. Essential coaching competencies extend beyond emotional mastery to include the ability to establish trust, demonstrate presence, and employ refined skills such as deep listening, intuitive sensing, incisive questioning, direct communication, and conflict resolution. Additionally, an effective coach must possess critical thinking abilities, foster action-oriented learning, set and manage goals efficiently, and uphold accountability throughout the coaching process.¹⁴

The essence of coaching lies in elevating the inner voice of the coachee - guiding them through self-affirmation, emotional recognition, and belief-challenging strategies. Through the process of questioning and constructive dialogue, a coach enables the coachee to dismantle unproductive behaviors and negative emotional patterns. No other intervention has been as profoundly effective as coaching in catalyzing personal transformation and mental restructuring.

Despite the immense impact a coach can have on a coachee's personal and professional trajectory, the role of a coach is never to manipulate, coerce, or impose control over the coachee's psychological landscape. The ethical responsibility of a coach is to facilitate empowerment rather than exert dominance. Modern psychology echoes this principle, emphasizing that true personal growth arises from nurturing the inherent strengths of an individual rather than dictating their evolution. A skilled coach provides guidance while respecting autonomy, ensuring that ethical integrity remains the foundation of the coaching relationship.

III. BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY COACHING: A TIMELESS APPROACH TO HUMAN WELL-BEING

The Buddha, far beyond being merely a religious figure, stands as one of history's most profound psychologists, psychotherapists, counselors, and life coaches. He offered solace to countless individuals across diverse walks of life - both ordinary and extraordinary. His teachings illuminate a path to complete fulfillment for all humanity, systematically categorized into two fundamental dimensions: (1) The Philosophy of Lifestyle (*Jīvanadassana*); (2) Liberation from All Forms of Suffering (*Vimuttidassana*).

At the heart of the Buddha's mission was the alleviation of human distress, be it in the form of obstacles, emotional turmoil, or any affliction perceived as a negative experience. Buddhism emerged in the 6th century BCE, a time devoid of contemporary terms such as "coaching" or "counseling." However, in Pāli, equivalents such as *upadisaṭi*,¹⁵ *anusāsaṭi*,¹⁶ *mantanāṭi*,¹⁷ and *ovadaṭi*¹⁸ convey

¹⁴ Low, J. Y. F. and Arthayukit, W. (2007) :17.

¹⁵ Rhys Davids, T.W., & William Stede, (2004):161.

¹⁶ Ibid. 52.

¹⁷ Ibid. 581.

¹⁸ Ibid. 580.

nearly identical meanings—guiding, instructing, and offering counsel. While secular and Buddhist coaching may employ different terminologies, their core purpose remains aligned: to assist individuals in surmounting their difficulties. Embedded within Buddhist doctrine is an inherent self-coaching mechanism, seamlessly integrated into the Buddha’s teachings. The modern psychological concept of a “client” finds its counterpart in the Pāli term “*Yogāvacara*”, denoting one engaged in spiritual discipline.¹⁹ Although contemporary psychologists have reinterpreted ancient methodologies through a modern lens, the Buddha’s approach remains remarkably pertinent to the dilemmas confronting the modern individual amid today’s disoriented world.

The ultimate aim of the Buddha’s teachings is the transcendence of cyclic existence, the eradication of suffering. To attain this liberation, individuals must engage in a disciplined process of right thought, right understanding, and right practice - an ethical commitment expected of all who walk the Buddhist path. Central to Buddhist psychology is the conviction that the mind governs the totality of human behavior. When the mind deviates, a person’s life inevitably deteriorates. Thus, Buddhist psychology imparts the wisdom to recognize mental shortcomings through self-reflection and inner analysis.

Moreover, the Buddha exemplified his coaching methodology throughout his 45-year spiritual journey. Many who sought him out did so in moments of profound despair, yearning for a guide who could liberate them from suffering and existential loss. The Buddha’s compassionate approach to coaching, as evidenced in his guidance to Kisāgotamī,²⁰ Angulimāla,²¹ Patācārā,²² and Culla Pantaka Thero,²³ showcases his intuitive mastery of transformational teaching. Without force or coercion, he employed gentle yet profound words, illuminating a path toward a life of greater security and inner peace.

Buddhist coaching did not cease with the Buddha’s passing; rather, it endures through the triadic foundation of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Within the Sangha, mutual support among disciples ensures the perpetuation of his wisdom. His disciplinary code (*Vinaya*) serves as an eternal compass, guiding humanity across generations, preserving the essence of his teachings, and fostering an ever-evolving journey toward enlightenment.

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY COACHING IN FOSTERING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

The foundation of Buddhist psychological coaching is deeply rooted in four fundamental teachings, as delineated by Sunanda. These guiding principles serve as a blueprint for self-awareness, problem resolution, and personal transformation.

¹⁹ Ibid. 621.

²⁰ Gnānobhāsa. M. (2008): 236.

²¹ Ibid. 359.

²² Ibid. 233.

²³ Ibid. 48.

One of the foremost tenets involves cultivating self-awareness through mindfulness and introspection, allowing individuals to recognize their own vulnerabilities and limitations. This process fosters a deep understanding of one's cognitive and emotional patterns, thereby enabling personal growth and self-improvement.

Furthermore, Buddhist psychology underscores the necessity of discerning the underlying causes of an issue by engaging with the principle of dependent origination—the intricate web of “cause and effect.” Understanding the root conditions that give rise to challenges is essential for devising effective and sustainable solutions.

A pivotal element of this coaching framework is the Four Noble Truths, which provide a structured approach to problem-solving. The first truth, *Dukkha*, acknowledges the existence of suffering, akin to recognizing the presence of a problem. The second, *Samudaya*, delves into the root causes of suffering, identifying the fundamental factors that give rise to difficulties. The third, *Nirodha*, offers the realization that suffering can be transcended by addressing its origin, thereby enabling individuals to overcome obstacles and attain their aspirations. Finally, *Magga*, the path leading to the cessation of suffering, emphasizes the importance of seeking alternative strategies and solutions to navigate challenges effectively.

Another crucial aspect of Buddhist psychological coaching is the gradual cultivation of mindfulness as a means to achieve long-term well-being. Mindfulness training plays a vital role in fostering a deeper connection with the body and breath, enabling individuals to observe the interplay between emotional fluctuations and external stimuli. By enhancing self-awareness, this practice cultivates a heightened sensitivity to the ways in which thoughts, external conditions, and interpersonal dynamics shape one's emotional landscape.

The Buddha's mastery in coaching for the establishment of a sustainable society is vividly documented in the *Pāli* Canon. Through profound Dhamma discourses, he provided guidance not only to lay followers but also to monastics and celestial beings, imparting wisdom on ethical living, harmonious coexistence, and the cultivation of moral integrity. His teachings emphasized the avoidance of harmful actions, the practice of generosity, adherence to right livelihood, and the importance of filial piety and familial support. Moreover, he encouraged the development of virtuous qualities such as humility and gratitude - characteristics that form the bedrock of a well-ordered, peaceful, and economically stable society.

The Buddha's unparalleled coaching methodology, infused with profound wisdom and practical applicability, continues to offer invaluable insights for contemporary society. By fostering ethical conduct, promoting moral responsibility, and eradicating destructive tendencies, Buddhist psychological coaching remains a vital force in the creation of a sustainable and harmonious world.

The Buddha's extraordinary capacity for guidance and instruction is

profoundly illustrated in the *Mangala Sutta* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, where his words, encapsulated in a succinct yet profound teaching, illuminate the path toward attaining the highest blessings. In this discourse, the Buddha imparted wisdom to a celestial being, delineating the essential principles one must adhere to in order to cultivate true prosperity in life. His guidance emphasized the importance of steering clear of the unwise while seeking the company of the sagacious, honoring those who are worthy of reverence, and establishing oneself in a place conducive to virtue. He further underscored the merit of past good deeds and the necessity of setting one's life on the righteous path. The Buddha extolled the virtues of acquiring extensive knowledge, mastering a craft, maintaining discipline, and cultivating refined speech. Additionally, he stressed the significance of filial piety, devotion to one's family, and engaging in honorable and peaceful occupations. Generosity, righteous conduct, assistance to relatives, and irreproachability in actions were also exalted, alongside the rejection of evil, abstinence from intoxicants, and unwavering commitment to virtue. The Buddha extolled humility, gratitude, patience, and attentiveness to the Dhamma, advocating for meaningful engagement with monks and religious discourse. Self-restraint, purity, comprehension of the Noble Truths, and the attainment of *Nibbāna* were held as paramount. Those who dwell in such wisdom - unshaken by fortune's fluctuations, unburdened by sorrow, free from defilements and fear - remain steadfast, basking in an unassailable state of happiness. These, the Buddha declared, are life's greatest blessings.²⁴

The Buddha's mastery of leadership guidance is further evidenced in his counsel to rulers and monarchs, instructing them in the virtue's requisite for righteous governance. Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Dasavidhārājadhamma*, enshrined in the *Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*²⁵ where the Buddha enumerates ten cardinal virtues that a sovereign must embody.

- (1) Charity (*Dāna*) – The willingness to forgo personal pleasures for the welfare of the people, exemplified through acts of generosity, whether material, intellectual, or in service to the common good.
- (2) Morality (*Sīla*) – The practice of moral integrity in both thought and deed, serving as an exemplar of righteousness for others.
- (3) Altruism (*Pariccāga*) – A disposition of selflessness, renouncing egocentricity and embodying the spirit of generosity.
- (4) Honesty (*Ājjava*) – An unwavering commitment to sincerity and integrity, performing duties with fidelity and authenticity.
- (5) Gentleness (*Maddava*) – A demeanor marked by humility, free from arrogance and disparagement of others.
- (6) Self-discipline (*Tapa*) – The ability to subdue passions, undertake responsibilities with diligence, and cultivate ascetic restraint.

²⁴ *Khuddaka Nikāya* (2006): 8.

²⁵ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2006): 96.

- (7) Non-anger (*Akkodha*) – A mind untainted by animosity, remaining composed even in the face of turmoil.
- (8) Non-violence (*Avihimsā*) – A principle of non-harm, abstaining from vengeance and aggression.
- (9) Orbearancef (*Khanti*) – The practice of patience and unwavering dedication to serving the collective interest.
- (10) Uprightness (*Avirodhana*) – A respect for differing perspectives, free from prejudice, committed to fostering harmony and societal order.

Through these ten virtues, the Buddha provided an enduring blueprint for enlightened and just governance, emphasizing the profound responsibility that rulers bear in ensuring the welfare of their people.

The Buddha's extraordinary pedagogical prowess transcends the realms of royal guidance and ethical conduct, extending profoundly into environmental stewardship. This is exemplified in the *Vanaropa Sutta*, a discourse on the merit accrued through the cultivation of groves. Within this sutta, the Buddha imparts wisdom to a celestial being, elucidating that those who dedicate themselves to the nurturing of the environment - by planting orchards, tending gardens, and fostering groves - accumulate immeasurable merit both in daylight and in darkness. This profound coaching is captured in the following passage:

Those who establish orchards and gardens, who cultivate groves, who construct bridges, who provide roadside shelters with refreshing water for weary travelers, who dig wells or create reservoirs, and who erect public sanctuaries - these are the individuals in whom merit flourishes unceasingly, both by day and by night. Such people are firmly grounded in the Dhamma, adorned with moral virtue, and destined for celestial realms.²⁶

The Buddha's invaluable contributions toward fostering a sustainable society are further illuminated through his discourses on the boundless benefits of cultivating and radiating *mettā* - loving-kindness. Across various suttas within the *Pāli* Canon, the Buddha extols the virtues of *mettā*, asserting that it is not merely a noble practice but an essential cornerstone for constructing a harmonious and enduring society. This form of benevolence is not restricted to one's kin and companions but extends limitlessly to all sentient beings across the cosmos. The Buddha delineates eleven sublime benefits that await those who wholeheartedly embrace and nurture loving-kindness:

Bhikkhus, when the mind is liberated through the practice, cultivation, and steadfast development of loving-kindness - when it is firmly established as one's guiding principle - then eleven blessings naturally follow:

- (1) One enjoys restful slumber;
- (2) One awakens in tranquility;
- (3) Nightmares do not torment one's repose;
- (4) One is cherished by fellow human beings;

²⁶ *Samyutta Nikāya* (2006): 60.

- (5) One is equally beloved by non-human entities;
- (6) Deities serve as one's guardians;
- (7) Fire, poison, and weaponry hold no power to harm;
- (8) One attains deep concentration with ease;
- (9) One's countenance radiates serenity and grace;
- (10) At the moment of passing, one remains unshaken and unconfused;
- (11) If enlightenment is not yet achieved, one is reborn in the exalted Brahma world.²⁷

Beyond these teachings, the Buddha's profound insights extend to the intricate dynamics of societal interactions, prescribing ethical conduct according to the roles individuals assume within their communities. His sagacious discourse on social obligations is vividly illustrated in the encounter with Sigāla, a young Brahmin who, in obedience to his late father's directive, performed ritual veneration of the six directions without comprehending their true significance. Upon witnessing this, the Buddha imparted an illuminating teaching, redefining the practice within the discipline of the noble ones.²⁸

My Lord, as my father lay on his deathbed, he enjoined me, saying: 'My son, you shall worship the six quarters.' Thus, out of reverence for my father's words, I rise at dawn, depart from Rājagaha, and with damp garments and unbound hair, I pay homage with clasped hands to these six directions.

"Young householder, it is not in this manner that the six directions should be revered within the discipline of the noble ones."

"Then how, Lord, should the six quarters be venerated in the noble discipline? I beseech you, Blessed One, to reveal the Dhamma and instruct me in the proper way."²⁹

In response, the Buddha expounded a higher understanding, elucidating that true reverence for the six directions manifests through the fulfillment of reciprocal duties and obligations within society:

- (1) East: The sacred bond between parents and children, wherein mutual love and responsibility flourish.
- (2) South: The relationship between students and teachers, wherein knowledge is imparted and received with reverence.
- (3) West: The sacred union of spouses, wherein fidelity and harmony prevail.
- (4) North: The sanctity of friendships, wherein loyalty and trust are upheld.
- (5) Nadir: The dynamic between employers and employees, wherein fairness and diligence foster prosperity.

²⁷ Buddhist Maha Vihara (2015): 7.

²⁸ *Dīgha Nikāya* (2006): 28.

²⁹ Ibid. 106.

(6) Zenith: The relationship between householders and ascetics, wherein generosity and spiritual guidance are exchanged.

Through this profound teaching, the Buddha illuminated the path to a just and compassionate society, wherein every individual, through the fulfillment of their duties, contributes to the collective well-being of all.

V. HOW BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY COACHING CULTIVATES A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

The Buddha's approach was profoundly pragmatic and deeply humanistic. Rather than engaging in abstract speculation on "the nature of reality," he provided clear, practical guidelines for navigating life's challenges. His teachings originate from an undeniable truth of human existence – suffering is a universal experience. A fundamental aspect of Buddhist coaching is the encouragement of inquiry (*ehipassiko*) rather than the imposition of dogma. As noted in *The Great Protection*,³⁰ the Buddha never forced his beliefs upon his disciples; instead, he urged them to question, test, and validate his teachings through personal experience. This method of experiential learning allowed his followers to fully engage with life, drawing wisdom from their own lived realities.

5.1. The nature of suffering and the path to liberation

Suffering manifests in myriad forms – anxiety, stress, grief, fear, and dissatisfaction—yet, the Buddha emphasized that suffering is workable. Rather than resigning to it, he encouraged a skillful engagement with suffering, one that leads to freedom. He identified five essential faculties necessary for this endeavor:

- (1) Confidence (faith) – A trust in the path and its efficacy.
- (2) Effort – The perseverance to cultivate wisdom and transformation.
- (3) Mindfulness – A heightened awareness of one's thoughts and emotions.
- (4) Concentration – The ability to maintain focus and clarity.
- (5) Discernment (wisdom) – The insight required to navigate suffering skillfully.

These faculties, universal in their applicability, are foundational not only in spiritual practice but also in skill acquisition - whether in music, sports, or meditative disciplines.³¹ The Buddha understood the innate human potential for growth and mastery, teaching his disciples how to harness these qualities in their spiritual development.

5.2. Tailoring coaching to individual temperaments

Before guiding a person toward a resolution, the Buddha first sought to understand their intrinsic nature and disposition. His method of engagement was rooted in personalized teaching. When engaging in dialogue, he demonstrated a remarkable ability to tailor his responses based on the individual's needs.

³⁰ Buddhist Maha Vihara, (2015): 3.

³¹ Sunanda Rev. (1990): 89.

In Buddhist tradition, four distinct teaching methods, collectively known as Vyākaraṇa, were employed:³²

- (1) Direct Explanation (*ekaṇṣa vyākaraṇa*) – Providing a straightforward response.
- (2) Analytical Explanation (*vibhajja vyākaraṇa*) – Elaborating through reasoning and analysis.
- (3) Questioning the Questioner (*patipuccā vyākaraṇa*) – Leading the learner to discover the answer through introspection.
- (4) Silence (*Thapanīya vyākaraṇa*) – Withholding a response when an answer would serve no practical purpose.

The fourth method is particularly striking, as it underscores the Buddha's wisdom in discerning when a question lacks relevance or utility. His teachings were not merely theoretical but practical tools for transformation, ensuring that his guidance always held real-world applicability.

5.3. Understanding individual learning styles

Another pivotal coaching technique in Buddhism revolves around recognizing the different types of learners. The Buddha classified individuals into four distinct categories, each requiring a unique approach:³³

- (1) Quick Learners (*Ugghaṭitaññū*) – Those who grasp the essence of a teaching instantly.
- (2) Analytical Learners (*Vipaṇcitaññū*) – Those who comprehend concepts through detailed explanation and elaboration.
- (3) Gradual Learners (*Neyya*) – Those who require repeated exposure, questioning, and guidance.
- (4) Literal Learners (*Padaparama*) – Those for whom knowledge remains intellectual, without deep penetration into lived experience.

By recognizing these distinctions, the Buddha ensured that his teachings were accessible and effective across diverse temperaments and capacities. His adaptive coaching style allowed each individual to absorb and internalize wisdom in a way that resonated with their cognitive and emotional predispositions.

5.4. The core Buddhist framework: Cause and effect

One of Buddhism's most profound insights is the doctrine of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) - the understanding that all phenomena arise due to specific causes and conditions. When confronted with suffering, the Buddha instructed that one must first identify its root cause, and only by eliminating the cause can the suffering be eradicated.

This investigative approach is central to Buddhist coaching:

- (1) Rather than merely addressing symptoms, it delves into underlying patterns.

³² Piyaratana, M. (2017): 13.

³³ Chandawimala R. (2012): 43.

(2) Rather than offering temporary relief, it seeks permanent transformation.

(3) Rather than imposing solutions, it empowers individuals to uncover their own path to liberation.

5.5. The Buddha as a masterful coach

From this analysis, it becomes evident that the Buddha's coaching skills were unparalleled. His ability to:

(1) Diagnose suffering with precision,

(2) Discern the unique nature of each individual,

(3) Tailor his teachings for maximum effectiveness,

(4) Instill in his disciples a sense of inquiry and self-discovery, ...

All contributed to the remarkable efficacy of his coaching methodology. His approach was not rigid but fluid, adapting to the psychological and spiritual needs of those he guided.

Through this profoundly personalized and deeply insightful method, the Buddha did not merely teach people how to cope with suffering - he empowered them to transcend it. This approach remains as relevant today as it was over 2,500 years ago, offering timeless wisdom for the cultivation of a more sustainable, compassionate, and awakened society.

5.6. Western psychology coaching in the creation of a sustainable society

Among the myriad facets of human interaction, the most fundamental and transformative is awareness - an invaluable gift and the ultimate pathway to articulating one's deepest thoughts. Contemporary psychology places significant emphasis on providing individuals the opportunity to probe and uncover the intricate, often hidden, mechanisms of their unconscious minds. The fulfillment of life's purpose hinges upon a mind that is lucid, free from avoidance and suppression, and in perfect equilibrium. A coach's true contribution lies in guiding the coachee toward the full maturation of their personality, enabling them to realize their potential.

Moreover, coaching has emerged as a far more potent catalyst for personal advancement than many other methodologies. It accelerates individuals towards their aspirations by fostering not only the refinement of internal dimensions - such as emotions, self-perception, value systems, moods, and sentiments - but also the enhancement of external facets, including skills, knowledge, experience, and reasoning abilities.

An increasing number of individuals regard coaching as the most effective means of self-improvement, preferring it over traditional counseling or therapy, which often carries societal stigma. Empirical studies affirm this trend, revealing that an overwhelming 98.5% of coaching clients deem their investment in a coach to be highly worthwhile.³⁴ The most pronounced

³⁴ Low, J. Y. F. and Arthayukit, W. (2007): 23.

advantages include heightened self-awareness, the ability to define and pursue personal ambitions, clarity regarding one's needs and passions, a well-balanced work-life dynamic, greater self-confidence, improved overall quality of life, enhanced communication proficiency, stronger professional and familial relationships, increased vitality, and a greater sense of joy. This underscores why even figures of immense success—such as Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, and Donald Trump - actively engage with coaches to extract even greater value from their personal and professional endeavors.³⁵

From this perspective, it is evident that both Buddhist and Western psychological coaching play indispensable roles in fostering a sustainable society. However, a notable distinction arises between the two. Buddhist psychology coaching is deeply rooted in the cultivation of wisdom, directing individuals toward a profound comprehension of the causes and conditions of suffering. It equips them with methodologies to navigate and transcend these adversities, ultimately fostering spiritual growth and leading to societies that are both spiritually and economically harmonious. Western psychology coaching, by contrast, centers predominantly on self-awareness—particularly in relation to one's intrinsic nature—with the ultimate aim of optimizing goal achievement and personal success.

VI. HOW WESTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL COACHING FOSTERS A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

Coaching reaches its pinnacle when a coach successfully amplifies the Coachee's positive internal dialogue, drowning out self-limiting beliefs that hinder personal growth. At its core, the three-phase coaching framework aims to cultivate awareness, secure commitment, and initiate action within the Coachee.

The methodology of coaching is anchored in the following foundational elements:

- (1) A structured three-stage coaching model (See, Say, and Do), directed by ten coaching milestones,
- (2) Five essential coaching tools,
- (3) Eleven coaching competencies,³⁶
- (4) Each phase within the model unfolds through distinct milestones: the "See" stage is steered by four pivotal steps (connect, contract, clarify, and challenge); the "Say" stage is structured around two milestones (co-create and commit); and the "Do" stage incorporates four final steps (change, continue, check, and close).

6.1. The 'see' stage: foundation for awareness

- (1) Connect signifies the establishment of a secure and nurturing environment, fostering genuine rapport through reciprocity, mutual

³⁵ Corporate Coach Academy, (2015): 7.

³⁶ Ibid.12.

respect, acknowledgment, and trust. This sets the groundwork for a transformative coaching relationship.³⁷

(2) Contract ensures that both coach and Coachee align their expectations, defining the coaching agenda, objectives, boundaries, responsibilities, ethical guidelines, and confidentiality terms. This clarity strengthens commitment and adherence to the process.³⁸

(3) Clarify delves into the Coachee's internal landscape - identifying limiting beliefs, aspirations, and present realities. This phase deconstructs misconceptions, allowing the Coachee to develop a robust sense of self-empowerment. As Nike's iconic slogan encapsulates: "Just Do It"³⁹.

(4) Challenge instills courage and conviction in the Coachee, prompting them to transcend their comfort zone. This process reframes challenges - not as mere obstacles but as stepping stones toward growth. Notably, the Chinese character for "crisis" integrates two concepts: danger and opportunity, emphasizing the duality of adversity and progress.⁴⁰

6.2. The "say" stage: from insight to commitment

(1) Co-create is a collaborative effort, guiding the Coachee to formulate self-driven objectives while cultivating self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, and inspiration. The goal is to ensure these aspirations remain feasible and genuinely attainable.⁴¹

(2) Commit cements the Coachee's ownership of their goals, fostering accountability and determination. To transcend comfort zones, the Coachee must mentally and emotionally invest in the journey ahead, reinforcing their drive with passion and purpose.⁴²

6.3. The 'do' stage: transforming intentions into action

(1) Change initiates the practical execution of the Coachee's transformation plan, targeting internal shifts necessary for tangible progress.

(2) Continue employs tools like Buckets and Balloons, equipping the Coachee with resilience, confidence, and sustained momentum to persevere. Open, transparent communication between coach and Coachee is paramount during this phase.

(3) Check introduces a structured feedback loop, enabling the Coach to assess progress periodically, making necessary refinements.

(4) Close encapsulates reflection and evaluation - measuring the coaching intervention's effectiveness and ensuring the Coachee's goals

³⁷ Ibid. 27.

³⁸ Ibid. 30.

³⁹ Corporate Coach Academy, (2015): 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 35.

⁴¹ Ibid. 43.

⁴² Ibid. 33.

are met as envisioned.⁴³

By guiding individuals through these meticulously structured stages, Western psychological coaching empowers people to reshape their perspectives, break self-imposed barriers, and navigate the path toward a more sustainable and self-fulfilled existence.

Within the framework of the three-stage coaching model, five essential coaching tools are identified: deep listening, powerful questioning, raising self-awareness, action-learning, and feedback-giving.

6.4. Deep listening: The pinnacle of human communication

Among these, deep listening stands as the cornerstone of effective communication, fundamental to every human interaction. It is a skill that necessitates both mindfulness and consistent practice. Engaging in deep listening compels coaches to remain fully anchored in the present moment, attuned to the words, emotions, and unspoken messages of their coachees. This profound attentiveness allows them to perceive and empathize with not only what is explicitly expressed but also what is left unsaid. This process is achieved by harnessing the four essential faculties of the coachee—the ears, eyes, heart, and mind.

Mindfulness, as previously emphasized, is an indispensable component in the pursuit of life's ultimate goals. It embodies the harmonious equilibrium of cognitive states and intentional practices. Contemporary psychology underscores the necessity of conscious engagement with the four primary human faculties—hearing, sight, emotion, and cognition—emphasizing their contemplative utilization. In essence, mindfulness serves as an internal observer, an elevated self-awareness that governs one's mental state and life trajectory.

6.5. Powerful questioning: Unlocking insight and clarity

Through the strategic use of powerful questioning, coaches guide their coachees toward self-discovery, enabling them to unearth solutions, gain clarity, and surmount personal challenges. By employing a structured and focused conversational approach—often utilizing funneling or filtering techniques - coaches facilitate the coachee's journey toward self-realization and resolution of their dilemmas.⁴⁴

6.6. The three levels of listening

The efficacy of a coach's listening skills is delineated into three progressive levels:⁴⁵

(1) Self-Centered Listening

At this initial stage, listening is constrained to mere interpretation of spoken words, based on the receiver's personal perspective rather than the

⁴³ Ibid. 37.

⁴⁴ Corporate Coach Academy, (2015): 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 45.

speaker's intended meaning. This superficial engagement predominantly relies on auditory perception, often neglecting deeper contextual understanding.

(2) Empathetic Listening

Moving beyond words, empathetic listening delves into the speaker's true message, deciphering both verbal and non-verbal cues, including tone and body language. This level of listening integrates both auditory and visual faculties, fostering a more profound comprehension of the speaker's emotions and intentions.

(3) Intuitive Listening

The pinnacle of listening, intuitive listening demands an all-encompassing attentiveness marked by deep curiosity and genuine interest. Here, the speaker becomes the focal point - the "center of the universe" - allowing the listener to grasp their essence holistically. This advanced level of engagement employs all four faculties - ears, eyes, heart, and mind - to attain a comprehensive understanding, not just of the words spoken, but of the individual as a whole.

By mastering these levels of listening and incorporating mindfulness into their practice, coaches cultivate a transformative space where coachees can gain clarity, overcome obstacles, and progress toward their goals.

6.7. The art of powerful questioning in coaching

Within the realm of coaching, the skillful art of questioning emerges as an indispensable instrument in guiding individuals along their developmental journey. Profound and incisive inquiries function as illuminating beacons, directing attention toward the most pertinent cognitive domains, thereby facilitating the discovery of insights essential for goal attainment, clarity enhancement, and the resolution of personal challenges.⁴⁶

Broadly speaking, questions in coaching can be classified into two principal categories:

- (1) Inquiry-based questions, which serve as catalysts for independent thought, moving away from the passive reception of knowledge.
- (2) Exploratory questions, designed to foster deeper comprehension by engaging coachees in an investigative process, enabling them to grasp the intricacies of a subject with heightened clarity.

A coach's role transcends mere guidance; it is to elevate a coachee's self-awareness, compelling them toward self-directed action in pursuit of personal growth. This elevation is crucial, for it aligns directly with an individual's intrinsic aspirations, reinforcing an ongoing commitment to self-betterment.

Moreover, instilling within the coachee a proclivity for action is paramount. Through engagement in proactive learning, individuals cultivate confidence, embrace accountability, and refine their competencies. With the solid foundation of self-assurance, they gain an unambiguous understanding of the precise steps required to progress. Subsequently, the process of tracking and

⁴⁶ Corporate Coach Academy, (2015): 18.

evaluating their development becomes markedly more effective. Ultimately, the coach provides constructive feedback, offering insights into areas necessitating improvement, drawing from keen observations of the coachee's verbal expressions, non-verbal cues, behavioral patterns, and tangible outcomes.

The methodologies employed in Western psychological coaching, which emphasize introspection and self-awareness, not only empower individuals to navigate their personal and professional landscapes with resilience but also contribute to the broader fabric of a sustainable society. By meticulously examining one's strengths and limitations and formulating strategic action plans to surmount challenges, individuals cultivate the adaptability and perseverance necessary for enduring success. In doing so, they foster communities that are not merely reactive but are driven by intrinsic motivation and fortified against adversity - an essential foundation for societal sustainability.

VII. MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow theorized that human motivation is fundamentally governed by the pursuit of specific hierarchical needs, with certain needs taking precedence over others. At the base of this hierarchy lies physiological survival, which serves as the primary driver of human behavior.⁴⁷ Only upon satisfying these fundamental physiological requirements can individuals begin striving toward higher-order needs, progressing systematically through successive levels of the hierarchy. This sequential advancement reflects an intrinsic motivational structure, wherein basic needs must be met before self-actualization can be pursued.⁴⁸

7.1. Physiological needs – the foundation of survival

These fundamental requisites for human existence encompass essential biological imperatives such as air, nourishment, hydration, shelter, appropriate clothing, warmth, sexual activity, and rest. The absence of these necessities renders the human body incapable of operating at an optimal level. Maslow underscored their paramount importance, asserting that all subsequent needs remain subordinate until these foundational requirements are sufficiently met.

7.2. Safety needs – the quest for security

Once physiological sustenance is secured, the human psyche seeks stability, order, and protection from external threats. These needs encompass security from environmental elements, legal structures, societal order, stability, and the liberation from fear.

7.3. Love and belongingness – the human social imperative

Following the satisfaction of physiological and safety needs, individuals are inherently driven by the need for social connection. This stage pertains to one's sense of belonging and the formation of meaningful interpersonal relationships. The longing for companionship, intimacy, trust, and mutual acceptance becomes

⁴⁷ Maslow (194): 370.

⁴⁸ Maslow (1954): 91.

a significant driver of behavior. Whether through friendships, familial bonds, or workplace affiliations, this level of need fosters emotional and psychological well-being.

7.4. Esteem needs – the pursuit of self-worth

Maslow delineated esteem into two distinct classifications:

(1) Self-esteem, which arises from personal accomplishment, dignity, mastery, and autonomy.

(2) The desire for external validation, manifesting in one's pursuit of respect, recognition, status, and prestige within society.

Particularly in children and adolescents, Maslow emphasized that the need for reputation and external validation often precedes the development of intrinsic self-worth and dignity.

7.5. Self-actualization – the apex of human potential

At the pinnacle of Maslow's hierarchy lies self-actualization—the realization of one's fullest potential. This stage encapsulates the drive for personal growth, self-fulfillment, and the pursuit of peak experiences. It embodies the aspiration to become all that one is inherently capable of achieving, a concept Maslow himself eloquently phrased as the desire to become everything one is capable of becoming.

7.6. Application in coaching and psychological development

Within the domain of Western psychological coaching, an acute awareness of where an individual resides within Maslow's hierarchy is imperative for effective guidance. A coach must discern which needs remain unmet in order to tailor strategies that address those deficiencies. By systematically fulfilling these hierarchical needs, coaching methodologies can be fine-tuned to foster holistic personal development. The ultimate goal is to facilitate the fulfillment of all essential needs, thereby enhancing the efficacy of coaching interventions. In doing so, not only is the individual's growth optimized, but the potential for cultivating a more sustainable and flourishing society is significantly amplified.

VIII. CONCLUSION

To conclude, coaching, as a contemporary discipline, emerges from the fusion of modern psychological research and personalized methodologies, enabling individuals to recognize their mental states and navigate their inner landscapes more effectively. Through this personalized guidance, one is gradually led toward self-discovery and ultimately empowered to attain their desired objectives. In a parallel vein, Buddhism presents a profound compendium of principles aimed at cultivating mental resilience and fostering emotional fortitude within society. At its core, coaching is inherently concerned with the psychological and behavioral dimensions of an individual striving for self-improvement and personal growth.

A comparative examination reveals that modern coaching can substantially benefit from Buddhist teachings, as there exist significant intersections between the two. As previously noted, the methodologies employed in coaching differ

between Buddhist traditions and Western psychological frameworks. While Buddhist coaching emphasizes a more holistic and situational approach, Western coaching operates through structured, methodological interventions. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the fact that modern coaching has systematically organized a wealth of techniques and empirical insights that are not explicitly cataloged in Buddhist teachings. Owing to its alignment with contemporary contexts, modern coaching offers a pragmatic framework that is well-suited for practical application. Given these observations, I strongly encourage further scholarly inquiry into the comparative study of coaching principles as presented in both Buddhist philosophy and contemporary coaching practice.

Furthermore, while it is evident that both Buddhist and Western psychological coaching contribute significantly to the development of a sustainable society, a fundamental contrast lies in their respective emphases. Buddhist psychological coaching underscores the cultivation of wisdom and profound spiritual realization, equipping individuals with the insight to discern the root causes of suffering and the means to transcend such afflictions. This approach fosters not only personal spiritual evolution but also a society enriched both spiritually and materially. Conversely, Western psychological coaching prioritizes self-awareness and the enhancement of one's intrinsic attributes, with the ultimate aim of facilitating goal attainment. However, this approach often lacks a pronounced emphasis on wisdom as a transformative tool for surmounting negative mental states - an essential component in optimizing performance and contributing to the establishment of truly sustainable communities.

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CONCEPT OF INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BRAMHA VIHĀRA UNDER SUB THEME: CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

This paper explores the transformative concept of inner peace and its potential for fostering world peace, with a particular focus on the Buddhist teaching of the *brahmavihāras* – *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). In a modern world dominated by materialism, consumerism, and individualism, the Buddha's teachings provide a unique path to overcome suffering (*dukkha*) and moral decline. The paper examines how the cultivation of these four divine abiding can not only lead to personal tranquility but also contribute to harmony on a global scale.

The essay outlines how the three forms of desire – *kāma-taṇhā* (sensuous desire), *bhava-taṇhā* (willingness to existence), and *vibhava-taṇhā* (desire for annihilation) – create conflict and suffering in both individual lives and society. It emphasizes the importance of cultivating faith (*saddhā*) and self-confidence, as prescribed by the Buddha, in overcoming blind faith and fostering a harmonious spiritual and social life.

Through a detailed analysis of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, the paper demonstrates how the *brahmavihāras*, when practiced, promote the dissolution of negative mental states such as greed, anger, and ignorance. Individuals can reduce hostility, foster reconciliation, and create a peaceful society by fostering qualities like loving-kindness and compassion. The paper concludes that the cultivation of inner peace through the *brahmavihāras* offers a practical and universal framework for transcending egoism, promoting collective well-being, and achieving lasting peace in both personal and global contexts.

Keywords: *Buddhism, world peace, mindfulness, meditation, consciousness, universal compassion, global harmony.*

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I. THE MODERN GRIP OF MATERIALISM AND CONSUMERISM: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

In contemporary society, materialism and consumerism have taken a firm hold of human consciousness, becoming dominant forces that shape individual and collective behavior. The pursuit of sensuous pleasures - often at the expense of the well-being of others - has become the overriding concern of modern life. This constant desire for more, driven by global markets and amplified by the pervasive influence of electronic media, has led to an era characterized by excessive consumption and the unchecked expansion of material wealth.

The resulting social dynamics have fostered a growing sense of individualism and selfishness, with people primarily focused on their own needs and desires. The relentless pursuit of wealth and success has caused many to lose sight of their responsibilities toward their families and communities. Parents are too preoccupied with work to adequately care for their children, and the elderly are often neglected. This has led to widespread societal tension and conflict, as individuals increasingly prioritize personal gain over collective well-being.

Globalization has only intensified this materialistic mindset, while simultaneously contributing to the erosion of moral values. As these values deteriorate, it becomes increasingly evident that society is “burning from within and without.” The Buddha, in his wisdom, captured this situation with his insightful verse: “What far is this laughter and rejoicing when we are ever burning from within and without?”¹

This profound statement serves as a warning about the consequences of a life driven by desire and attachment, where individuals fail to recognize the inevitable suffering that results from such an existence.

In his supreme knowledge the Buddha identified the roots of all evils and realized that the cultivation of mind management is the only way for attaining true and everlasting happiness is the only way for attaining true and everlasting happiness. In the very first verse of the *Dhammapada*, he declares that the mind is the source of all suffering and all physical and vocal acts, done with polluted mind, result in endless suffering and also cause misery in our life.² On the contrary, if these acts are associated with cultivated or well managed mind, these result in happiness.³ In this pair of parallel verses, the Buddha reveals the significant part of our mind in our life. It is also made clear here that in Buddha's thinking volition or *chetna* and other psychic states associated with each moral and immoral states of consciousness is ‘*karma*’ or action. The Buddha declared “*Etenaham Bhikkhve Kammanti vadami*” (O monks I declare that volition or intention is *karma*).

From such teachings of the Buddha it becomes amply evident that all that we are today is the inevitable outcome of the nature of our mind management, which is the essence of our life management both at individual and at social level.

¹ “*Konu haso kimanando niccama pajjalite sati/ andhakarena onaddha pakasam va gavesatha*”.

² *Dhp* 1.

³ *Dhp* 1.

II. THE EROSION OF MORAL VALUES AND THE DECLINE OF SOCIAL TRUST

As materialism continues to dominate, the erosion of moral values has led to a breakdown in the fabric of society. Faith in ethical principles has diminished, and trust among individuals has steadily eroded. Whether in personal relationships, family dynamics, or societal structures, a lack of mutual trust is now widespread. This absence of trust further deepens societal divisions, perpetuating conflict and dissatisfaction.

In spiritual terms, the Buddha emphasized the importance of *saddhā* (faith) as a fundamental component of spiritual life. He terms *saddhā* as the seed of his spiritual cultivation – “*saddhā bijam topo vutthi*”. *Saddhā*, however, is not blind faith. It is the cultivation of trust and confidence in the principles of moral conduct and the transformative potential of one’s actions.

The Buddha encouraged his followers to cultivate self-reliance and inner strength, warning against reliance on external sources of power or divine intervention. The Buddha further reveals that one gets purified or impure by dint of one’s deed-good or bad, and that none can purify another “A person is purified by their actions, whether good or bad. No one can purify another.”⁴

This highlights the individual responsibility for one’s actions and the consequences that arise from them. The Buddha’s teachings underscore that, rather than depending on others, each person can purify their mind and actions through ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom.

III. FAITH IN MORAL LAWS: A FOUNDATION FOR SPIRITUAL CULTIVATION

For the Buddha, *saddhā* is the “seed” of spiritual cultivation, as it enables individuals to embark on the path of purification. Yet, this faith must be developed and refined, and it must be rooted in understanding, not blind belief. The Buddha’s teachings on *saddhā* serve as an essential foundation for cultivating a life that is harmonious, both internally and externally. This is evident in his teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, which outline the ethical, mental, and wisdom practices required for the cessation of suffering and the attainment of nirvana (liberation). The Buddha has denied the existence of such a god or gods and has revealed the phenomena with having threefold characteristics – “*sabbe sankhara anicca, sabbe sankhara dukkha, sabbe Dhamma Anattā’ti*”.⁵

In place of a divine being that governs existence, Buddhism teaches that the universe operates according to the principles of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). These three characteristics, known as the *tilakkhaṇa*, define the nature of all phenomena and highlight the need for individuals to take responsibility for their actions.

⁴ Dhṛp 165: “attana va katam papam attani sankilissati, attana akatam papam attana va vi-sujjhati, suddhi asuddhi paccatam nanno annam visodhaye”.

⁵ R. Walpol, “What the Buddha Taught”, Oneworld publication, 2011, p. 16.

In this context, the Buddha emphasized the importance of *kamma* (action). Each person is responsible for the consequences of their deeds, and one's future is determined by the ethical quality of one's actions. This teaching emphasizes personal responsibility and empowers individuals to take control of their spiritual development. Deeds are the only factors for one's better or worse future – “*kammassaka, manava, satta, kammadayada, kammayoni, kammabandhu, kammaopatissarana, kamman satte vibhajjati yadidan hinappanitatayati*”.

IV. THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF CONDITIONED CO-ORIGINATION AND THE ROOT CAUSES OF SUFFERING

Buddhism offers a unique and insightful explanation of the root causes of suffering and the path to its cessation. According to the Buddhist doctrine of conditioned co-origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), all phenomena arise due to specific causes and conditions. This fundamental law of causality highlights that nothing exists in isolation; everything is interdependent. Central to this teaching is the idea that suffering, *dukkha*, is a result of unfulfilled desire, *taṇhā*.

In the context of modern society, *taṇhā* - or craving - manifests in three primary forms: (1) *kāma-taṇhā*: the desire for sensuous pleasures, often seen in consumerism and the pursuit of material wealth; (2) *bhava-taṇhā*: the desire for continued existence, a craving to perpetuate the self and its possessions; (3) *vibhava-taṇhā*: the desire for annihilation, seeking to escape from anything that challenges or disturbs the ego.

These desires lead to *lobha* (greed), *rāga* (attachment), and *dosa* (ill-will). The first two forms of desire are linked to attachment to agreeable objects, while the third leads to hatred and aversion toward those things or people that are unfavorable. All of these manifestations of desire arise from *moha* (ignorance), which blinds individuals to the transient nature of all phenomena. The Buddha taught that attachment to the impermanent - whether in the form of material possessions, relationships, or even one's own identity - inevitably leads to *dukkha*, or suffering. The essence of the Buddha's message is that liberation from suffering can be achieved through the abandonment of these attachments and the cultivation of wisdom, mindfulness, and compassion.

V. BRAHMAVIHĀRAS AND INNER PEACE

In Buddhism, the practice of *brahmavihāra* (the Four Divine Abidings) - *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity) - offers a practical framework for cultivating peace, both within oneself and about others. These four qualities form the foundation of the Buddhist path to liberation, promoting inner harmony and extending that peace outward to others.

(i) *Mettā*: The practice of *mettā* involves developing a boundless love for all beings, regardless of their identity, background, or circumstances. It is a form of love that is free from attachment, focused on the well-being of others without expectation of reward. By cultivating *mettā*, individuals can transcend ego-driven desires and develop an unconditional sense of goodwill toward all living beings.

(ii) *Karuṇā*: *Karuṇā* is the natural extension of loving-kindness. While *mettā* focuses on wishing for the happiness of others, *karuṇā* arises when one sees the suffering of others and seeks to alleviate it. True compassion involves an emotional connection with those in distress and a desire to help them overcome their suffering.

(iii) *Muditā*: *Muditā* is the ability to rejoice in the happiness and success of others. Unlike envy or jealousy, which stem from attachment, *muditā* is a selfless joy in the well-being of others. It is an antidote to feelings of inadequacy or competition, fostering a sense of shared happiness and interconnectedness.

(iv) *Upekkhā*: *Upekkhā* refers to a balanced, impartial attitude toward all experiences, whether pleasant or unpleasant. It is the cultivation of mental stability that allows one to remain undisturbed in the face of life's fluctuations. *Upekkhā* helps individuals develop resilience in the face of suffering, maintaining inner peace even in difficult circumstances.

Together, these four qualities - loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity - form a comprehensive and holistic approach to peace. They begin with the transformation of the individual, fostering emotional maturity and inner stability. As these qualities are cultivated, they extend outward, influencing relationships, communities, and even nations. By practicing the *brahmavihāras*, individuals develop a mindset and heart that prioritize empathy, goodwill, and resilience in the face of challenges. This collective transformation can lead to a more peaceful and harmonious society, free from the divisive forces of greed, hatred, and ignorance, allowing for greater unity, cooperation, and understanding across all levels of existence.

The concept of *brahmavihāras* is not a theoretical idea but is very much practical and practicable in our day-to-day life. It cannot be confined to a particular type of family, group, society, state or nation, rather it bears the element of universal application. Here arises a question as to who is a competent person to think, and do good for others – the ideal with which the Buddha started his missionary life. We find a reference in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* wherein Ananda clarifies before a group of six *paribbajaka*'s that a person under the influence of *rāga* (passion) neither identifies his well – being not that of others, but when he gets free from the influence of that he becomes able to identify egoistic well-being, altruistic well-being and also the both i.e. common good: “*Ratto kho, avuso, ragenaabhibhuto pariyadinnacitto attatthampi yathabhutam nappajanati, rage pahine attatthampi yathabhutam pajanati, parattham pi yathabhutam pajanati, ubhayattham pi yathabhutam pajanat*”⁶. Besides, *dosa* and *moha* (ill-will and ignorance) too, are immoral roots which defile our mind, says the Buddha. Till they are active, real egoistic or altruistic well-being cannot properly be understood. Mind is like water. If water is dirty or unstable, it cannot reflect the image correctly. In the same way, mind accompanied by the above defiling factors, cannot understand egoistic and altruistic well-being correctly. On the contrary, if the mind is pure, it will be able to understand them

⁶*Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, p. 66. 6.

properly, and by transcending the common human capabilities, will realize the Noble Truth. It has been clarified by the Buddha with a beautiful simile:

Seyyathapi, bhikkhave, udakarahado accho vippasanno anavilo tattha cakkuma puriso tire thito passeyya sippisambukampi sakkharakathalempi macchagumbampi carantampi tittantampi. Tam kissa heto? Anavilatta, bhikkhave, udakassa, evameva, kho, bhikkhave, so vata bhikkhu anavilena cittena attatthan va nassati parattham va nassati ubhayattham va nassati uttarim va manussaDhamman alamariyananadassanavisesam sacchikarissati ti thanametam vijjati. Tan kissa heto? Anavilattabhikkhave, cittassa ti⁷.

Thus, Buddhism functions in a balanced manner. It emphasizes personal purification and promotes universal benevolence as well. The message of Buddha applies to every individual, to every society, and the whole world. It is precisely universal: “*Bhavatu Sabba-mangalam*”.

The cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* is not just an individual pursuit but has profound implications for societal and global peace. In a world marked by division, conflict, and suffering, these practices offer a transformative approach to bridging divides and fostering mutual understanding. By embracing *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*, individuals can contribute to the healing of societal wounds and promote unity across cultures, religions, and nations.

In a world of growing materialism and consumerism, the practice of the *brahmavihāras* provides an antidote to the fragmentation and alienation that often arise in modern life. Through the cultivation of these divine qualities, individuals and communities can move beyond self-interest and embrace a vision of shared well-being. Ultimately, the *brahmavihāras* offer a path toward a more compassionate, equitable, and peaceful world.

VI. BRAHMAVIHĀRAS AND THE PATH TO GLOBAL PEACE

The *brahmavihāras*, as the name suggests, are divine qualities or virtues that are conducive to mental and emotional well-being. These four virtues provide a framework for cultivating inner peace by counteracting the negative states that give rise to suffering. Each *brahmavihāra* offers a specific antidote to the afflictive emotions of greed, hatred, and ignorance, leading to a purer, more peaceful state of mind. Inner peace - a profound state of calm and tranquility within the mind and soul - is a universal aspiration that transcends cultural and religious boundaries. In Buddhism, the pursuit of inner peace is rooted in its analysis of suffering and the path to transcend it. The Four Noble Truths identify craving (*taṇhā*) and attachment as the root causes of mental unrest, with the cessation of suffering (*Nibbāna*) representing ultimate peace.⁸ The Noble Eightfold Path provides a structured approach to achieve this state, emphasizing ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. Meditation practices such as *vipassanā* (insight meditation) and *mettā bhavana* (loving-kindness meditation) are central to cultivating inner calm.⁹ While *vipassanā* encourages observing the

⁷ *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, 1.p. 200. (PTS).

⁸ Rahula, W. (1974). *What the Buddha Taught*. Grove Press.p. 29.

⁹ Goldstein, J. (2003). *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*. Shambhala Publications,

impermanence of thoughts to develop detachment, *mettā bhavana* fosters compassion, dissolving anger and resentment that disrupt inner peace.¹⁰ Unlike Jainism's rigorous asceticism, Buddhism's Middle Way advocates moderation, making peace more accessible to both ascetics and lay practitioners.¹¹

Social or household *Dhamma* is nothing but a means to realize oneself and practice in our daily life. It is an art of living as it keeps one happy and contented in all situations. *Dhamma* includes all the *Buddha Vachanas* or the teachings of the Buddha which are compiled in *Tri-Piṭaka* by the monks of Theravāda tradition of Buddhism. The basic teachings representing the *Dhamma* of Buddha are in the form of Four Noble Truths, Eight-Fold Path, *pratītya-samutpada*, *nibbāna*, Four Brahma vihāras, and *tilakkhaṇa* etc.

The poor and the needy, the sick and the infirm, the lonely and the destitute demand the compassion of noble-minded men and women to whatever religion and to whatever race they may belong. Persons cultivating the sublime mental state of universal compassion can do great service to the people afflicted directly or indirectly by the epidemic in a better way. The Buddha said a noble example by attending on the sick people himself and exhorted his disciples; thus, he who ministers to the sick, ministers to me". Today, the world requires a human society consisting of such human beings who have such noble human values as universal compassion without any self-interest, universal feeling of joy, universal feeling of friendliness and above all equanimity of mind leading to world peace. The basic teaching of *Pratītya Samutpāda* or condition co-origination has been declared the essence of the *Dhamma* by the Buddha, "yo paṭiccasamuppādam passati, so dhamma passati"¹².

This *Dhamma* of the Buddha is universal and is equally applicable in ancient and modern society. In the light of this basic principle of the Buddha, even the modern high technology society sees clearly that all the problems have a definite cause for their origin and these can be solved by the eradication of their causes and conditions.

In Buddha's *Dhamma* mind or human consciousness has been considered to be the most important factor in all sorts of human undertakings and the mind management has been declared to be the essence of life management. The *Dhammapada* declares: "*Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā, / Mona setthā manomayā. / Manasā ce padutṭhena / Bhāsti vā karoti vā / Tato nam dukkhamanveti / Cakkam'va vahoto padam.*"¹³

That is to say that the mind is the forerunner of all evil states of mind. It is the chief. All mental problems are created by it. If one speaks or acts with

p. 75.

¹⁰ Goldstein, J. (2003). *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*. Shambhala Publications, p. 75.

¹¹ Harvey, P. (2000). *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge University Press, p. 68.

¹² *Majjhima Nikāya*, Igatpuri edition, 1, p. 251.

¹³ *Dhp* 1.

evil mind, suffering follows him in the same way as the wheel of a cart follows the hoof of the drought horse. Each of these sublime states of mind of human consciousness can prove most effective in the healing of mental tension. By cultivating the universal friendliness or *mettā* towards all human beings, the mind will be free from anger and all types of enmities. An individual exerting to cultivate *mettā* identifies himself with all suffering people, making no distinction of caste and creed, etc. He can regard the whole universe as his motherland and all beings as his fellow brothers in the ocean of life.

In the pursuit of inner peace, the ultimate goal is not merely the cessation of personal suffering but also the cultivation of peace that extends to the world. In Buddhism, the *brahmavihāras* - *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā* - are not just personal practices; they are the foundation of a universal vision of peace. These four divine abodes, when practiced collectively, have the potential to foster peace not only within individuals but also within societies and across the globe.

Loving-Kindness (*mettā*): The foundation of the *brahmavihāras* is rooted in loving-kindness, also known as *mettā*, which is the deep and genuine wish for all beings to be happy. In a world where division, conflict, and competition are pervasive, the practice of loving-kindness is not just a personal virtue but a societal necessity. *Mettā* calls on individuals to transcend personal biases, prejudices, and attachments, urging them to adopt a mindset of universal goodwill. It encourages a shift from self-centeredness to an inclusive view that recognizes the interconnectedness of all beings, irrespective of their race, background, or social status.

Mettā is far more than just an emotional affection for others. It is a conscious effort to actively wish for the well-being and happiness of all beings, regardless of their actions, beliefs, or perceived wrongdoings. For instance, even when encountering individuals who have wronged us, the practice of *mettā* invites us to set aside feelings of resentment or hatred, wishing them happiness and peace, just as we would wish for ourselves. This quality of unconditional goodwill, when practiced on a large scale, can bridge the divides that fuel societal tensions and conflicts, creating a sense of shared humanity. Through *mettā* one adds to the funds of human happiness, one makes the world brighter and better.¹⁴

A powerful example of this can be seen in the work of figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, who promoted *ahimsā* (non-violence) and loving-kindness in the face of oppression and injustice. Gandhi's approach, rooted in *mettā*, encouraged not only the pursuit of individual peace but also social transformation through love and empathy. *Mettā* helps soften the heart and replace animosity with compassion, offering a pathway to overcome hatred and resentment that often fuel violence and social unrest. The Buddha's teachings stress that it is through the consistent cultivation of loving-kindness that one can achieve inner peace, which in turn radiates outward, creating a ripple effect that fosters goodwill,

¹⁴ *Bhattharinitishatakam* verse 13.

harmony, and societal peace.¹⁵ By practicing *mettā*, individuals contribute to a collective environment of understanding and cooperation.

Compassion (*karuṇā*): *Karuṇā* is one of the four *brahmavihāras*, and it plays a vital role in bridging the gap between loving-kindness and the active alleviation of suffering. *Karuṇā* involves not only recognizing the suffering of others but also a deep emotional response that moves one to act. It calls for a shift from self-centeredness to empathy, offering a perspective that allows individuals to see the pain of others as their own. As the Dalai Lama aptly puts it, "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."¹⁶ Compassion thus transforms the practitioner, fostering a sense of interconnectedness with all sentient beings.

In a world filled with poverty, war, and systemic injustice, the act of compassion becomes even more important. For example, in response to natural disasters, compassionate individuals and organizations come together to provide immediate relief to affected communities. Their actions- whether providing food, water, medical care, or emotional support - are rooted in the understanding that suffering is an inevitable part of the human experience. Such efforts can help heal not only physical wounds but also the social and emotional scars left by trauma. In a broader sense, movements for social justice and human rights are grounded in compassion for marginalized groups who experience systemic suffering due to inequality and oppression.

The Buddha's teachings on *karuṇā* emphasize that true compassion arises from the realization that all beings, like ourselves, experience suffering. It compels individuals to embrace suffering with empathy rather than avoid it, encouraging them to act to alleviate pain and promote social harmony. As people develop greater compassion, they also tend to view their actions through the lens of social equity, seeking to create a world where suffering is minimized, and compassion is the guiding principle. This is how *karuṇā* transforms individuals into compassionate agents of change.

Sympathetic Joy (*muditā*): The third *brahmavihāra* - *muditā* - is a profound practice that encourages individuals to rejoice in the happiness and success of others. Unlike negative emotions such as envy or jealousy, which stem from a sense of inadequacy or competition. *Muditā* invites one to experience genuine joy when others thrive. In a world often defined by comparison, competition, and individualism, *muditā* offers a powerful antidote. By focusing on the happiness of others, individuals can transcend feelings of scarcity and embrace a mindset of abundance and collective well-being.

For instance, in professional environments, instead of feeling threatened by a colleague's success, a person practicing *muditā* would feel joy and celebrate their achievements. This fosters a culture of collaboration rather than competition, where everyone's success contributes to the greater good. In

¹⁵ Kornfield, J. (1993). *A Path with Heart: A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life*. Bantam Books, p. 12 - 21.

¹⁶ Dalai Lama. (1999). *The Art of Happiness*. Riverhead Books, p. 36.

personal relationships, *muditā* helps build emotional resilience and support, as individuals celebrate each other's milestones, whether big or small, without the need for comparison.

On A broader societal level, *muditā* plays a crucial role in creating a culture of cooperation rather than rivalry. In political and international relations, cultivating *muditā* can be a powerful tool in fostering diplomacy, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect. For example, when nations celebrate each other's successes in areas such as scientific advancements, environmental protection, or human rights, they lay the foundation for global cooperation and collective progress.

By nurturing *muditā*, individuals and communities shift from a mindset of "me versus you" to one of shared joy and mutual respect.¹⁷ The Buddhist teachings encourage that by cultivating *muditā*, we can transform our relationships and, in turn, create a more peaceful and harmonious world. This practice is not only beneficial for personal growth but also essential in fostering social change and long-term global peace.

Equanimity (*upekkhā*): *Upekkhā*, represents the final *brahmavihāra* and embodies the cultivation of mental balance, impartiality, and inner peace amidst life's inevitable fluctuations. It is the ability to remain composed in the face of both joy and suffering, success and failure. In an ever-changing world filled with uncertainties and challenges, equanimity provides the mental resilience needed to face adversity without being overwhelmed by it. Unlike indifference, equanimity does not imply a lack of care or concern; instead, it reflects the ability to maintain clarity of mind and emotional stability, regardless of external circumstances.

In practical terms, equanimity helps individuals navigate difficult situations without reacting impulsively or emotionally. For example, when facing criticism or injustice, equanimity allows one to respond with wisdom rather than anger or defensiveness. Likewise, when experiencing success or praise, equanimity helps avoid pride or arrogance, encouraging humility instead. The capacity to maintain equanimity in these moments fosters personal growth and nurtures healthy relationships, both of which are essential for cultivating peace.

Moreover, equanimity is crucial in fostering social harmony and collective well-being. In a society often marked by polarized opinions and conflicting ideologies, cultivating equanimity helps individuals avoid becoming caught in cycles of animosity, resentment, or extremism. For instance, in political or social conflicts, an individual with equanimity can engage in difficult conversations with an open mind, seek understanding, and respond to opposing views with patience rather than hostility. In doing so, they contribute to an environment where dialogue, mutual respect, and collaboration can thrive.

The Buddha's teachings on *upekkhā* emphasize the importance of developing this quality as part of a balanced and harmonious life. As the Buddha himself explained, equanimity enables one to remain unaffected by

¹⁷ Kornfield, J. (1993). *The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace*. Bantam, p. 46.

personal desires and fears, making it a foundational component in the journey toward enlightenment and world peace. By cultivating equanimity, individuals contribute to the creation of a world where peace is not only possible but sustainable, as it enables both personal and collective transformation.¹⁸ Therefore, equanimity is a vital quality for overcoming life's challenges while maintaining balance and serenity. When practiced individually and collectively, it supports social harmony, reduces conflict, and fosters an environment conducive to peace and mutual respect.

VII. BRINGING THE *BRAHMAVIHĀRAS* TO SOCIETY

The *brahmavihāras*, when embraced individually, have the potential to bring profound transformation to one's personal life. However, their true power lies in their collective practice. When large numbers of people - across different communities, cultures, and nations - begin to embody the qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, the ripple effect can lead to a more peaceful world.

At a societal level, the *brahmavihāras* challenge the prevailing mindset of materialism and self-centeredness. They offer an alternative to the competitive, individualistic nature of modern life and provide a blueprint for cultivating a more altruistic, harmonious society. The collective adoption of these values can address issues of injustice, inequality, and conflict, promoting social justice, peace, and collective well-being.

The practice of the *brahmavihāras* is essential not only for individuals but also for leaders and educators. Those in positions of power and influence must embody these qualities, as they set the tone for societal norms and values. When leaders lead with compassion, equity, and a spirit of mutual benefit, they inspire others to follow suit. Teachers, too, have an important role in transmitting these values to younger generations, fostering a culture of peace, empathy, and cooperation.

Creating a culture of peace requires the collective efforts of individuals, communities, governments, and institutions. It involves the active participation of all members of society in promoting peace through compassionate action and mutual understanding. Education, social policies, and diplomatic efforts must align to cultivate a culture where the welfare of all beings is prioritized over self-interest and material gain. The cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* contributes directly to building such a culture, where relationships are grounded in respect, kindness, and cooperation. By fostering a deep sense of interconnectedness, the practice of the *brahmavihāras* enables individuals to see the suffering of others as their own, encouraging collaborative efforts to address global challenges such as poverty, violence, and environmental destruction.

¹⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000). *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. Buddhist Publication Society, p. 45.

VIII. CONCLUSION: INNER PEACE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR GLOBAL PEACE

In conclusion, the teachings of the Buddha, particularly through the *brahmavihāras* - *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā* - provide a profound and practical framework for fostering both inner peace and world peace. In an era of increasing materialism, individualism, and societal fragmentation, these four divine qualities offer a pathway to counteract the root causes of suffering - greed, hatred, and ignorance. By cultivating these virtues within oneself, an individual can transcend personal desires, ego-driven motives, and destructive mental states, creating a harmonious and peaceful internal environment.

Furthermore, the impact of practicing the *brahmavihāras* extends beyond the individual. As the mind becomes purified, the cultivation of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity radiates outward, fostering positive, empathetic, and balanced relationships with others. This ripple effect has the potential to mend fractured societies, bridge cultural divides, and foster global peace.

The Buddha's teachings highlight that world peace begins with the transformation of the individual mind. By nurturing the *brahmavihāras* in our daily lives, we contribute to a collective consciousness that prioritizes compassion, understanding, and shared humanity over divisiveness and conflict. In a world increasingly in need of reconciliation and healing, the practice of the *brahmavihāras* offers a timeless and universally relevant solution. It serves as a beacon of hope that, through the cultivation of inner peace, individuals and societies alike can create a more peaceful, just, and compassionate world.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

It is the mentality of man that creates this material world. Everything we see around us reflects the state of our mind. Buddha said that “Mind is everything; the root of all Dharmas is mind.” Therefore, the instability within man is the main reason behind unrest, violence, and stress in the world. To establish world peace, it is necessary that a person first establishes peace within himself. According to Buddhism, inner peace is the basis of not only individual but also collective and global peace.

In today’s global conditions, where war and violence are on the rise, Buddhist philosophy serves as an important guide to inner peace. Inner peace refers to a state of mental stability and balance in which one experiences spiritual tranquility by freeing oneself from negative thoughts and mental toxins. This peace extends beyond the individual, influencing both society and the world at large. The root cause of inner unrest is ignorance. In Buddhism, this is explained through four fundamental misperceptions: seeing the impermanent as eternal, the non-self as self, suffering as happiness, and the ugly as beautiful. This ignorance gives rise to craving, which drives a person to indulge in material pursuits, ultimately leading to suffering.

According to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* theory in Buddhism, all events occur under the law of cause and effect. A person’s mindset, desires, and attitudes shape both their personal and social life. Understanding impermanence and non-self frees one from worldly attachments and leads to deeper self-realization. The Buddha taught the path to inner peace through three stages: morality, *samādhi*, and wisdom. Morality cultivates purity in one’s conduct, *samādhi* enhances concentration and mental stability, and wisdom fosters a deep understanding of truth. By following this path, one can cultivate peace not only within oneself but also in society and the world. Only through personal inner peace can global peace be achieved, and Buddha’s teachings provide the

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ultimate path to inner peace. Thus, inner peace is not only the key to personal growth but also a fundamental cornerstone for establishing world peace.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace, samādhi, wisdom.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The physical world is a reflection of the collective mentality of humans - whatever we see and feel, whether positive, negative, or creative, represents the human mind. In fact, the creation of the world is the creation of the human mind. Since the beginning of human existence, people have been continuously shaping the physical world according to their state of mind. Thus, every situation that arises in the world is connected to the human mind. Buddha said, 'Everything is made up of the mind; the root of all things is the mind; the mind is primary.' Therefore, alongside worldly progress, increasing agitation, violence, and tension have emerged - directly linked to the human mind. As a result, social disintegration and conflicts are escalating. Today, the world stands on the brink of a global war where destruction is visible. Undoubtedly, what the world needs today is peace, not war. In such a situation, it is crucial to understand that world peace is deeply connected to an individual's inner peace.

Inner peace refers to a sense of stability and balance of mind. It is a state of mental equilibrium in which a person is free from inner conflicts, negative thoughts, and mental toxins. According to Buddhism, inner peace is the foundation not only for personal well-being but also for collective and global peace, as the world is a creation of the human mind. Agitation, dissatisfaction, war, and social disintegration are all man-made. Through his life and teachings, the Buddha emphasized that true peace begins within - if you seek peace in the world, you must first establish it within yourself.

In modern times, as conflict and violence have become major global challenges, only Buddha's teachings can provide guidance in establishing world peace. His teachings not only help individuals attain inner peace but also foster a deeper understanding of the higher dimensions of natural laws, promoting harmony with them. Beyond personal enlightenment, Buddha's teachings serve as a unifying force for humanity, offering a path to a prosperous society built on equality, liberty, and fraternity.

In this article, we will explore the meaning of inner peace from a Buddhist perspective, the methods to attain it, and how inner peace contributes to world peace. Without inner peace, world peace remains an unfulfilled dream - and more importantly, it is essential for the future of humanity.

II. INNER PEACE

Inner peace refers to a state of equanimity and mental stability. It is a balanced state of mind in which a person is free from internal conflicts, negative thoughts, and mental anxiety. This implies that the primary cause of a disturbed mind is one's negativity, turmoil, and inner conflicts. The external manifestation of this mental state is the physical world itself. Today, the world

is engulfed in agitation, violence, and tension. Many nations have been burning in the fire of war for years, and humanity now stands on the brink of a third world war, where only immense destruction is visible. The root cause of this entire situation is the human mind.

2.1. World Unrest: Causes and the path to peace

The root of world unrest lies in the disturbed, dualistic, and agitated state of the human mind. The external world is merely a reflection of this inner turmoil. As long as one does not comprehend the *nissārata*¹ (insubstantiality) of material things, inner peace remains unattainable. Humans not only perceive the world as eternal but also see their existence as everlasting. This eternalist view prevents them from recognizing the world as transient and without essence.

This belief in the eternal nature of the self and the world is a primary cause of inner unrest. With this perception, a person seeks to dominate others, engages in religious conflicts, and relentlessly accumulates wealth and material possessions, believing that such prosperity will secure a privileged rebirth - perhaps even within the same family. This *bhava-taṇhā*² (craving for existence) compels individuals to pursue material gain at any cost, further distancing them from reality. Devoid of insight into the true nature of existence, they chase after *anicca dhamma* (impermanent things), which inevitably leads to suffering.

This insatiable craving is known as *taṇhā*, the fundamental cause of *dukkha*³ (suffering)⁴. At its root lies *avijjā* (ignorance), which fosters the eternalist delusion. Ignorance manifests as four wrong perspectives, also known as the four opposites:

(1) perceiving the temporary as permanent, (2) perceiving the non-self as the self, (3) perceiving the ugly as beautiful, and (4) perceiving the painful as pleasurable. The first two perspectives form the foundation of the eternalist mentality. In essence, these four distortions reflect a person's ignorance. Such delusions lead to actions rooted in *avijjā*, which, in turn, generate conflicts on both personal and societal levels. When left unchecked, these conflicts escalate into large-scale violence, social disintegration, and ultimately, global unrest. In reality, ignorance is the absence of insight into the truth, leading to distorted perceptions of reality.

On the other hand, *sammā-sati* (right mindfulness) and *paññā* (wisdom) illuminate the truth, leading to *yathābhūta ñāṇadassana* (seeing things as they truly are). According to Buddhism, when a person cultivates *paññā*, they break

¹ *Majjhima-nikāya*, Pt. Rahul Sankrityayan, *Anenjsampaya Sutta*, Samyak Publication, 32/3, Pashchim Puri, New Delhi-63, First Edition; 2009, p. 483.

² *Trsna* (in *Pāli taṇhā*), craving or thirst, is of three kinds: *Kama-taṇhā*, *bhava-taṇhā*, and *vibhava-taṇhā*.

³ In the second noble truth Buddha stated that craving (*trsna* or *taṇhā*) is the fundamental cause of suffering.

⁴ *Majjhima-nikāya*, Pt. Rahul Sankrityayan, *Anenjsampaya Sutta*, Samyak Publication, 32/3, Pashchim Puri, New Delhi-63, First Edition; 2009, p. 622.

free from the cycle of ignorance and craving, embarking on a path guided by wise reflection and an understanding of conditionality. This marks the transition from ignorance to knowledge - the path of *sammā-diṭṭhi* (Perfect Vision) and *sammā-sambodhi* (complete awakening).

Ignorance gives rise to *taṇhā*, which entangles a person in material attachments, leading to suffering. However, *sīla*⁵ (moral discipline) calms the mind, enabling *saṁādhi* (mental concentration), which in turn fosters *paññā* (wisdom). Through continuous cultivation, one attains profound insight into reality, leading to dispassion and non-clinging. This detachment naturally brings inner peace, allowing one to dwell in a mental state free from worldly bondage - where one experiences supreme tranquility through complete *sammā-saṁādhi* (Perfect Meditation) and *sammā-paññā* (Perfect Wisdom).

2.2. Buddhist perspective and ultimate truth

The teachings of the Buddha are rooted in reasoning and *anubhava* (direct experience). They are not based on mere tradition or blind faith. In the *Kālāma Sutta*⁶, the Buddha advises:

O *Kālāmas*, do not believe something simply because you have heard it repeatedly, because it is a tradition, because it is found in scriptures, or because it conforms to logical reasoning or established doctrines. Do not accept something merely because it appears valid, aligns with personal views, or is spoken by a respected teacher. Instead, carefully investigate, analyze, and verify whether it leads to wholesomeness and well-being.

Buddhism, therefore, does not accept any claim that fails to withstand the scrutiny of direct experience and seeing reality as it is. Truth can be understood in two ways: (1) The intrinsic nature of things, beyond words and concepts. (2) The ultimate truth, which is independent, timeless, and absolute. While worldly truths may vary, Buddhism asserts that all phenomena in this conditioned world arise due to *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination). Nothing exists independently; everything is *paratantra* (contingent upon causes and conditions). Their intrinsic nature is *suñña* (empty of inherent existence). Buddhist philosophy conveys this reality through key concepts such as *paṭicca-samuppāda* (causality), *Nāgārjuna's śūnyatā* (emptiness), *anicca* (impermanence), and *anattā* (non-self). These doctrines offer a rational and systematic approach to understanding life and the universe.

III. CORE BUDDHIST DOCTRINES ON REALITY

3.1. Anicca (Impermanence)

All conditioned phenomena - whether material objects, thoughts, emotions, or experiences - are in a constant state of flux. Nothing remains

⁵ There are many sets of precepts Negative and positive: *Panch sīla* (Negative & positive) *Asta sīla*, *Dasa sīla* (negative & positive), fifteen *sīla* for bodhisattva and many more.

⁶ Dr. Ambedkar B. R., *The Buddha and his Dhamma*, Buddha Bhoomi Publication, Nagapur, Printed at The Corporate body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, p. 218.

the same, even for a single moment. The doctrine of *anicca*⁷ emphasizes that change is not abrupt but continuous, occurring at every instant. Often, we perceive change only when a significant event manifests as a result, such as a sudden heart attack leading to death. However, in reality, the heart attack is merely the outcome of an ongoing process that has been unfolding over time, perhaps for years. *Kṣaṇikavāda* (Momentarism) further illustrates this principle, demonstrating that impermanence is not an abrupt transformation but a continuous process occurring in every moment. Nothing truly “exists” in a fixed state; rather, everything is in a state of becoming.

3.2. *Anattā* (Non-self)

This doctrine refutes the existence of an eternal, unchanging soul. Nothing transmigrates from one life to another in a fixed, immutable state. Instead, all phenomena arise due to conditions and cease when those conditions dissipate. Every being is composed of *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter), both of which are in a constant state of flux. Since all compounded phenomena lack an independent essence, the notion of a permanent self is untenable. This realization frees one from *atta-diṭṭhi* (self-view) and leads to true insight.⁸

3.3. *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent origination)

Paṭiccasamuppāda is the foundational principle of Buddha-dhamma, also known as the Principle of Relativity or the Law of Cause and Effect. The Buddha articulated this principle in the following words: “*Imasmim sati idaṃ hoti, imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti. Imasmim uppāde idaṃ uppajjati, imasmim nirodhe idaṃ nirujjhati.*” (“When this exists, that arises. When this does not exist, that ceases. With the arising of this, that comes to be. With the cessation of this, that ceases.”) This teaching illustrates the interdependent nature of all things, events, and conditions. Nothing in the *saṅkhāra-loka* (conditioned world) possesses an independent or intrinsic existence; rather, everything arises due to specific causes. When the cause ceases, its effect also ceases. This is the *saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* (conditioned nature) of all phenomena, a principle applicable to every aspect of existence. The Buddha further elucidated *Paṭiccasamuppāda* through the *Dvādaśa Nidānāni* (Twelve Links of Dependent Origination)⁹, which are as follows:

Avijjā (Ignorance) – A fundamental delusion that manifests in four ways: (1) Perceiving the impermanent as permanent, (2) Mistaking the non-self (*anattā*) for a self (*attā*), (3) Viewing suffering (*dukkha*) as happiness, and (4) Seeing the impure as pure. *Avijjā* serves as the root cause of both birth and suffering.

⁷ Sangharakshita Ugyen, *The Essential Sangharakshita*, edited by Karen Stout, published by Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville MA 02144 USA, p. 204.

⁸ Sangharakshita Ugyen, *The Essential Sangharakshita*, edited by Karen Stout, published by Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville MA 02144 USA, p. 196.

⁹ Sangharakshita, *A Guide to the Buddhist Path*, Published by Windhorse Publications, Unit 1 - 316 The Custard Factory Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA, p. 77.

Saṅkhāra (Mental Formations/ *Kamma*) – The mental impressions and volitional actions shaped by past deeds, creating conditions for future existence. Influenced by *avijjā* (ignorance), the mind continuously accumulates various *saṅkhārā*, which in turn shape one's experiences.

Viññāṇa (Consciousness) – The cognitive awareness that identifies, perceives, and interacts with objects. It is categorized into eight types: *cakkhu-viññāṇa* (eye-consciousness), *sota-viññāṇa* (ear-consciousness), *ghāṇa-viññāṇa* (nose-consciousness), *jivhā-viññāṇa* (tongue-consciousness), *kāya-viññāṇa* (body-consciousness), *mano-viññāṇa* (mind-consciousness), *kliṣṭa-mano-viññāṇa* (defiled-mind consciousness), and *ālaya-viññāṇa* (storehouse consciousness). *Viññāṇa* arises and develops based on past *saṅkhārā* (mental formations).

Nāma-rūpa (Name and Form) – The stage of embryonic existence in which a being exists in a rudimentary form. *Nāma* (mental components) and *rūpa* (physical form) arise from *viññāṇa* (consciousness). *Salāyatana* (Six Sense Bases) – The six faculties through which a being interacts with the world: *cakkhu* (eye), *sota* (ear), *ghāṇa* (nose), *jivhā* (tongue), *kāya* (body), and *mano* (mind). *Phassa* (Contact) – The interaction between the sense bases and external objects, giving rise to sensory experience. *Vedanā* (Feeling/ Sensation) – The inevitable result of contact. *Vedanā* is classified into three types: *sukha-vedanā* (pleasant feeling), *dukkha-vedanā* (unpleasant feeling), and *upekkhā-vedanā* (neutral feeling).

Taṇhā (Craving) – *Taṇhā* arises from *vedanā* (sensations) and is categorized into three types: *kāma-taṇhā*, *bhava-taṇhā*, and *vibhava-taṇhā*. *Kāma-taṇhā* stems from pleasant sensations (*sukha-vedanā*) and refers to the craving for sensual pleasures. *Bhava-taṇhā*, also arising from *sukha-vedanā*, signifies attachment to existence or becoming - a deep-seated desire for continued being in *saṃsāra* (the cycle of existence). *Vibhava-taṇhā*, originating from painful sensations (*dukkha-vedanā*), represents the craving for annihilation - the desire to escape or destroy that which is unpleasant.

Upādāna (Clinging) – *Kāma-taṇhā* (craving for sensual pleasures) leads to *upādāna*, an intense attachment or grasping toward desired objects, resulting in efforts to acquire them. *Bhava* (Becoming) – Arising from *upādāna* (clinging), *bhava* refers to the state of existence shaped by one's attachments and efforts to attain desired objects. *Jāti* (Birth) – Arising from *bhava*, *jāti* refers to the emergence of a new existence, whether in a physical or mental form. *Jarā-Maraṇa* (Aging and Death) – Arising from *jāti*, *jarā* (aging), and *marāṇa* (death) are the inevitable consequences of birth.

This illustrates the principle of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as taught by the Buddha: “*Imasmiṃ sati, idaṃ hoti; imasuppādā, idaṃ uppajjati.*” (“When this exists, that arises; with the arising of this, that comes to be.”)

3.4. *Sāpekkhatā* (The principle of relativity)

The doctrine of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) is also known as the Principle of Relativity (*Sāpekkhatā*), as no physical phenomenon

exists independently; rather, its existence is conditional. No phenomenon has an intrinsic reality of its own; instead, it arises due to specific conditions. These conditions themselves are the result of preceding causes, forming an interconnected causal chain.

Similarly, the present state acts as the foundational cause for future conditions to arise. Thus, no form or phenomenon is ultimate or permanent; rather, everything is part of a continuous process of transformation. What appears to exist in any given moment is merely a relative manifestation, shaped by ever-changing conditions.

3.5. *Śūnyatā* (Emptiness)

Śūnyatā does not denote mere “nothingness”; rather, it signifies the absence of intrinsic, independent existence in any physical object or event. It is a profound insight into reality that dispels *avijjā* (ignorance) and leads one toward *paññā* (wisdom).

The doctrine of *śūnyatā* was expounded by the great philosopher Ācārya Nāgārjuna, who elaborated on the Buddha’s teaching of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination). He presented *anattā* (non-self) uniquely through the lens of *śūnyatā*. When multiple *Dhammas* (phenomena) arise due to specific conditions, an entity appears to come into existence. However, the very circumstances that led to its arising are themselves part of an ever-changing causal chain. The object or event that seems to be “born” is merely a temporary manifestation, and when the conditions that sustained it dissolve, its existence ceases. In reality, no object has an inherent, independent essence - neither before nor after the conditions that brought it into being. As soon as the cause disappears, the so-called existence of that object or event ceases. This is an uninterrupted, dynamic process without any fixed point of permanence. It highlights the contingent nature of all things, affirming that no phenomenon possesses *sabhāva* (intrinsic essence) of its own.¹⁰

Śūnyatā, therefore, reveals the interdependent nature of existence, illustrating the principles of *paccaya* (causality), *idappaccayatā* (specific conditionality), *sappaccaya* (relativity), and *anattā* (non-self).

3.6. *Sīla, samādhi, paññā and inner peace*

Sīla (moral conduct) and *bhāvanā* (meditation) are two essential disciplines without which the mind cannot attain *samādhi* (concentration). Without concentration, *paññā* (wisdom) cannot develop. Through the dedicated practice of *sīla*, worldly distractions are pacified, allowing the mind to stabilize in meditation. With this stability, *paññā* naturally arises, leading to deeper insight into reality¹¹. The *Prajñāpāramitā Sutta* discusses the concept

¹⁰ Sangharakshita, *Vision and Transformation*, published by Windhorse Publications, Unit 1 - 316 The Custard Factory Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA, p. 30.

¹¹ *Digha Nikaya*, Rahul Sankrityayan and Jagdish Kashyap (translator), *Sondand Sutta*, Published by Gautam Book Centre, Chandan Sadan, C-263 A, Gali No-9, Delhi-93, First Edition 1979, p. 45.

of *śūnyatā*, signifying ultimate purity - the fundamental nature of all beings. However, due to *avijjā* (ignorance) or a distorted perception of reality, *taṇhā* (craving) arises. This craving generates *akusala-cittas* (unwholesome mental states), entangling individuals in material pleasures, sensory gratification, and suffering. As a result, the mind becomes restless and unstable, mirroring the broader state of world agitation.

This condition is known as *akusala-bhāva* (an unwholesome state), which obstructs the path to *citta-visuddhi* (mental purification). Such unskillful tendencies divert an individual from the *ariya-magga* (Noble Path). According to Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, the Buddha taught that these obstacles can only be overcome through the practice of *sīla* (moral discipline), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom).

The *tipiṭaka* illustrates that when a seeker took refuge in the Buddha and received *upasampadā* (ordination), they were first trained in *vinaya* (disciplinary rules), such as how to wear the *cīvara* (robe), walk mindfully, and adhere to the monastic code. Alongside learning the *Saṅgha's* rules, they were also taught meditation. This gradual training aligned them with the discipline of the *Saṅgha*, emphasizing both moral conduct and mental concentration, as both are fundamental to *citta-visuddhi* (purification of mind). However, mere adherence to ethical precepts does not lead to *paramattha-sacca* (ultimate truth). One must cultivate constant awareness of reality, as *sīla* (morality) and *samādhi* (concentration) serve only as means to reach the final goal. Until one realizes the ultimate truth, attachment and craving persist, preventing true inner peace.

Achieving *citta-visuddhi* (inner purification) is not an instantaneous event but a gradual process. When a person begins practicing *sīla* (moral conduct), mental agitation diminishes. Simultaneously, they engage in *bhāvanā* (meditative development). Moral discipline stabilizes the mind, while meditation cultivates concentration, which in turn nurtures *paññā* (wisdom). *Paññā* is the ability to perceive reality as it is. With deep insight, one not only understands their *svabhāva* (nature) but also discerns the *anattā-lakkhaṇa* (characteristic of non-self) in all conditioned phenomena. As understanding deepens, they recognize the *anicca* (impermanence) of material existence. This realization gradually dissolves mental entanglements, dismantling *micchā-diṭṭhi* (false views) about the world. Attachment to material existence weakens, allowing ethical conduct to deepen further.

As moral conduct strengthens, concentration deepens. The more focused the mind becomes, the more *paññā* flourishes. As *paññā* develops further, one gains a clearer perception of existence, making it easier to dispel false views. This, in turn, reinforces *sīla*, creating a continuous cycle of inner refinement. Gradually, the mind progresses toward the realization of the ultimate truth, culminating in *upekkhā* (equanimity) and profound inner tranquility.

The Buddha's threefold training - *sīla* (moral conduct), *samādhi* (meditation), and *paññā* (wisdom) - is deeply interconnected. Without *paññā*, moral conduct remains superficial. Without *sīla*, meditation lacks stability. Without meditation, the mind cannot develop concentration, and without concentration, *paññā*

cannot arise. In essence, *sīla* lays the foundation for wisdom. A mind consumed by *dosa* (hatred) or *rāga* (craving) cannot achieve mental focus. Without focus, wisdom cannot unfold. Only through *paññā* can one directly realize the ultimate truth and attain nibbāna, the state of absolute inner peace.¹²

3.7. *Sīla, samādhi, paññā* and world peace

Sīla (moral conduct) is a deeply personal discipline, intimately tied to an individual's inner development. Through the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* (meditation), and *paññā* (wisdom), one gains insight into the true nature of *rūpa* (material phenomena). This process allows one to perceive reality through the lens of *anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (non-self), *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination), and *suññatā* (emptiness). As understanding deepens, false views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) dissolve, giving rise to *anāsanga* (detachment) from worldly objects and sensory pleasures. This detachment fosters inner freedom, leading one toward the realization of the ultimate truth.

Even while engaging with material things, one does so with *sati* (mindfulness) and *upekkhā* (equanimity)¹³. The tendency to cling to or grasp possessions gradually dissolves. This detachment, when combined with awareness, leads to *ajjhata santi* (inner peace). A person who attains this state not only experiences deep tranquility but also naturally cultivates *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *dāna* (generosity), all of which contribute to the well-being of others. When one is free from *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hatred), and *moha* (delusion), they no longer spread negativity into the world. Just as an individual consumed by unwholesome qualities perpetuates suffering, one who embodies *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *paññā* (wisdom), *kṣamā* (forgiveness), and inner peace naturally radiates these virtues to all around them.

IV. INNER PEACE AS THE FOUNDATION OF WORLD PEACE

Every circumstance that arises in society originates at the individual level. *Ajjhata santi* (personal inner peace) is the foundation of *lokiya santi* (global peace). If we genuinely seek peace in the world, it must begin with the cultivation of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, which foster the Buddha-*dhammā* qualities - *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), *upekkhā* (equanimity), and *saṃatā*¹⁴ (equality). Only by cultivating these virtues within individuals can peace be established on a global scale. True peace cannot be achieved through *himsā* (violence), *jāti-vāda* (casteism), *asamānatā* (inequality), *kaṭṭharavāda* (extremism), or *dhammavāda* (sectarianism). A so-called peace built on coercion, oppression, or discrimination is like a dormant *jvālamukhi* (volcano) that can erupt at any moment. The way of the sword may

¹² *Digha Nikaya*, Rahul Sankrityayan and Jagdish Kashyap (translator), *Sondand Sutta*, Published by Gautam Book Centre, Chandan Sadan, C-263 A, Gali No-9, Delhi-93, First Edition 1979, p. 46 - 47.

¹³ A Bodhisattva lives in the state of the four *Brahmaviharas*: *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā*.

¹⁴ Sangharakshita, *A Guide to the Buddhist Path*, Published by Windhorse Publication, Unit 1 - 316 The Custard Factory Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4 AA, p. 174.

win battles, but it can never bring lasting peace.

If peace is built on inequality, it is only a matter of time before people recognize the injustice they have endured. The moment this realization dawns, resistance begins, and the fragile illusion of peace crumbles. Any peace founded on injustice is merely a prelude to revolution - one that, inevitably, turns bloody.

When we speak of world peace, we must first acknowledge its absence. Conflict, insecurity, caste-based discrimination, inequality, violence, corruption, and oppression are undeniable realities. Upon deeper reflection, we see that the root of these issues lies in *akusala-citta* (unwholesome and disturbed minds). The suffering we witness is merely the outward projection of *taṇhā* (craving) within individuals. Just as unchecked craving fuels global turmoil, the cultivation of inner peace fosters world peace. To genuinely seek peace, we must address its root cause - *taṇhā*. By weakening craving and nurturing *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* alongside the noble virtues of *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *samatā*, *bhāduṭṭā*, and *dāna*, true and lasting peace can be realized.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the turmoil, violence, conflict, and tension that plague the modern world are mere reflections of the inner unrest within individuals. The Buddha emphasized that external circumstances are shaped by the state of the human mind. Until one gains mastery over inner agitation, conflict, and *taṇhā* (craving), true and lasting peace in the world cannot be realized.

According to Buddhism, *avijjā* (ignorance) is the root cause of all suffering and unrest. Conversely, ignorance can only be eradicated through the cultivation of *paññā* (wisdom) - the ability to perceive reality as it truly is. Until one understands the fundamental nature of existence - *anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (non-self), *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination), *suññatā* (emptiness), and relativity - one remains trapped in *taṇhā* (craving), the very source of suffering and inner turmoil. The realization of this truth is possible only through *paññā*, and the attainment of such wisdom marks liberation from delusion. With the arising of *sammā-paññā* (right wisdom), one sees the world as it truly is, becomes free from *upādāna* (clinging), and attains inner peace.

The development of *paññā* is a gradual process that rests upon the foundation of *sīla* (moral conduct) and *samādhi* (meditative concentration). The practice of *sīla* purifies the mind, creating the conditions for deep concentration in *bhāvanā* (meditation), which in turn leads to the arising of *paññā*. Through continuous practice on this path, one attains the highest level of wisdom. *Paññā* dissolves *micchā-ditṭhi* (false views) and unveils *yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana* (insight into reality). When an individual attains inner peace, they transcend external conflicts and naturally contribute to the realization of world peace.

Given the current global conditions, it is evident that inner peace is a prerequisite for world peace. Buddhism not only provides a path to inner tranquility but also offers a profound philosophy for *samāja-saṅgaha* (social

harmony) and global peace. As more individuals cultivate inner peace, the world will naturally be guided by *ahiṃsā* (nonviolence), *mettā* (loving-kindness), and *kalyāṇa-mittatā* (noble friendship), forming the true foundation of lasting peace. This article clearly illustrates that the true foundation of world peace lies in personal inner peace, which can be attained through the path of morality, meditation, and wisdom. When an individual cultivates detachment from material possessions and realizes the nature of truth and emptiness, virtues such as compassion, friendship, forgiveness, and generosity naturally arise. This inner transformation not only leads to personal peace but also radiates positive energy throughout society and the world, guiding humanity toward a brighter and more peaceful future.

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ETHICS, MENTAL CULTIVATION, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE FOLLOW BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

In the world, there are multi-polar fluctuations, war, terrorism, the outbreak of fake media information, environmental and climate change that lead to people's inner insecurity. Building a civilized and modern society and using scientific facilities to improve people's well-being are the common desire of the country's and world's leaders. Finding balance, reality, and meaning connection in life becomes a greater challenge than ever. Therefore, cultivating inner peace is an extremely necessary issue.

According to Buddhism, the mind is the root of all happiness or suffering. A peaceful mind is a peaceful world, a tranquil mind is a tranquil world. However, cultivating a peaceful mind is a big subject, full of difficulties, and requiring patience.

In the *Nikāya Canon*, the process of taming the mind is compared to the process of taming a wild animal. Just as an animal trainer must use many different techniques to control the animal, so the practitioners must use many methods to tame and control the mind. The Buddha's teachings can provide many methods to nurture, treat and transform, and create the true inner peace, which are: practicing mindfulness, cultivating the four boundless states, contemplating on impermanence, non-self, practicing letting go, living according to the dhamma... These are the most effective remedies to help humans create inner peace and to build world peace.

Keywords: *cultivate inner peace, world peace, Buddhism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

When modern technology develops, it has a great impact on human life in many aspects. On the one hand, it provides conveniences, changes the

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way of communication, increases labor productivity and promotes economic development; on the other hand, it affects people's physical and mental health. Overuse of technology also causes health problems such as stress, insomnia, and disorders related to the use of social networks. So that it also impacts the natural environment, such as e-waste, and inequality in access to technology in less developed areas. Modern technology not only improves the quality of life but also poses many challenges that humans need to face and manage.

In a multipolar society, people have to face many pressures such as: faith, work, and social security, leading to psychological crisis, inner insecurity, causing negative impacts on the quality of life. On the other hand, conflicts, hatred, war, epidemics, natural disasters... make people always feel insecure and worried. All of the above factors combine to increase the feeling of insecurity of people in this modern world. Finding balance, true connection and meaning in life becomes a greater challenge than ever. Therefore, nurturing inner peace is extremely necessary. Because "a peaceful mind leads to a peaceful world, a peaceful mind leads to a peaceful world". In The Platform Sutra, the Master said:

You people assembled here, listen carefully. The physical body of man in this world is itself a city. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are the gates to the city. Outside there are five gates; inside there is the gate of consciousness. Mind is the ground; self-nature is the king. If there is self-nature, there is a king; if self-nature departs, there is no king. If there is self-nature, the body and mind exist; if self-nature departs, the body and mind.¹

However, how to have a truly peaceful mind is a big problem. Because we cannot say that peace is peace, say that peace is peace, because life is inherently a result of mutual influence, as people often say, 'the tree wants to be still but the wind never stops', so most of our lives are easily swept away by the flow of life if we do not know how to control ourselves, stop by controlling ourselves and observing causes and conditions. When objective and internal conditions are improved, a mind is controlled and restrained, living less dependent and enslaved by emotions, then there will be inner peace, and the world will be at peace.

Creating a truly peaceful world is everyone's dream. Peace can be established through military, political, diplomatic, and economic means. But when human needs are too great, expansion, extremism, greed and hatred are on the rise, peace is difficult to achieve sustainably. Only when inner peace and tranquility are established in each person, will the world have peace and true peace exist. Therefore, nurturing a peaceful mind is the core and the root to create a peaceful environment and society. As long as the inner peace is peaceful, free from hatred, narrow-mindedness, and selfishness, then people will know how to love, share, and forgive, then the world will be peaceful and happy. Buddhist teachings can provide many methods to nurture, heal and

¹ *The Platform Sutra of The Sixth Patriarch* the text of the Tun Huang manuscript with translation, introduction, and notes by Philip b. Yampolsky New York and London Columbia university press 1967, p. 37.

transform, to create true and true inner peace for humanity in the present and the future.

II. CONTENT

2.1. The insecurity of the current social situation

The current social unrest can be attributed to a variety of causes, reflecting a range of economic, political, cultural, and environmental issues. We can list a range of causes as follows:

(1) Economic inequality: As the market economy develops, and modern technology greatly affects human life, the growing gap between rich and poor, along with unequal economic opportunities, has created tension and dissatisfaction in society.

(2) Unemployment and job insecurity: Changes in the labor market, including the rise of automation and new technology, have made many people worried about the future of their jobs. The application of artificial intelligence and robots to partially replace manufacturing jobs has led to some low-skilled workers losing their jobs. This issue leads to insecurity in today's society.

(3) Climate change and environmental crisis: The impacts of climate change, from natural disasters to resource crises, have caused anxiety about the sustainability of life and the environment in the future. The melting of large ice sheets from the Arctic leads to rising sea levels, while the increase in global temperatures has greatly affected the cultivation and livestock of some regions, leading to human insecurity. When people have scheming or selfish intentions and exploit nature excessively, they will receive adverse consequences such as earthquakes, natural disasters, the natural environment, climate change, and environmental pollution.²

(4) Crisis of political confidence: Loss of confidence in political institutions and dissatisfaction with leadership can increase feelings of insecurity, especially when society does not feel adequately protected or represented.

(5) Social polarization and division: Cultural, ethnic, religious and ideological issues have caused polarization in society, increasing feelings of alienation and insecurity among different groups.

(6) Impact of technology and social media: In an increasingly connected world, rapid access to information and the spread of fake news have also left many people feeling disoriented and unable to distinguish between what is real and what is fake.

The current social insecurity requires a comprehensive view and sustainable solutions to mitigate these concerns, from improving education and economic systems to building stronger institutions to establish peace of mind for people.

2.2. Consequences of inner insecurity

When there is restlessness or boredom, the boredom here is not because

² Thích Trung Định, *Phật giáo với môi trường sinh thái*, <https://tapchivanhoaphatgiao.com/luu-tru/9869>.

the scene is not satisfying to the mind but because the mind is not satisfying to the scene.³ Inner insecurity can have many negative consequences for both a person's mental health and daily life. Here are some common consequences that inner insecurity can lead to:

(1) Loss of confidence: When a person feels insecure about their self-worth, they often doubt their abilities and feel inadequate. This can cause them to fear challenges and not accept opportunities.

(2) Low self-esteem: Insecure people often compare themselves to others, feeling inferior and unworthy, which leads to low self-esteem.

(3) Chronic anxiety: Insecurity often leads to prolonged anxiety and stress, where a person is constantly worried about being judged, rejected, or not meeting expectations.

(4) Emotional exhaustion: Prolonged feelings of stress can lead to mental fatigue, which reduces concentration and performance at work and school.

(5) Afraid to communicate: Insecure people often avoid social interactions for fear of rejection or judgment. They may avoid social situations or try to hide their true selves, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation.

(6) Lack of trust in relationships: People with insecurity often have difficulty trusting others, making it difficult for them to build and maintain healthy relationships. They may fear betrayal or distrust the feelings of others.

(7) Insecurity leads to defensive or destructive behavior: Insecure people often become defensive when they feel emotionally threatened, even when there is no real threat. They may overreact to criticism or negative comments. Insecurity can lead to behavior that seeks approval from others, sometimes by being a people pleaser, or changing themselves to meet other people's expectations, even if it makes them uncomfortable. On the other hand, insecurity can hinder personal and professional development: for example, they delay or avoid opportunities because they often avoid new challenges or opportunities due to fear of failure, which can hinder their personal and career growth. Insecurity can reduce the ability to make decisions, because the person is afraid of making mistakes or disappointing others. It also increases mental health problems such as: Depression, anxiety disorders. And it hurts the quality of life because of the feeling of dissatisfaction, whether they achieve or not. Insecure people often get caught up in worries about the future or the past, making it difficult for them to live fully in the present. When a person feels insecure about themselves, they tend to withdraw from those around them, for fear of being judged or hurt in a relationship. And finally, inner insecurity reduces creativity and innovation, due to the fear of failure, and the reluctance to try new ideas or venture into the unknown, for fear of failure or judgment. This reduces the ability to be creative and innovative.

³ Toại Khanh, Dịch, *Kinh nghiệm tuệ quán*, Nxb. Đồng Nai, 2021, tr. 502.

In short, internal insecurities or “boredom with existence”⁴ not only affect mental health but also greatly hinder social relationships, personal development, and overall quality of life. Recognizing and confronting feelings of insecurity can help improve mental health and open up opportunities for more comprehensive development.

2.3. Common solutions for peace of mind

When a person feels insecure, or stressed, they often seek spiritual therapy. They may seek advice and support from a psychotherapist. Some people seek entertainment, travel, listen to music, read books, watch movies, or go shopping. From the needs in real life, a variety of forms of entertainment are created. Some people seek healthy entertainment, but others seek unhealthy entertainment such as drinking, gambling, or violent entertainment. These are common solutions to meet the necessary needs in life. However, these solutions are only temporary and not sustainable. Therefore, there needs to be a proper assessment and sustainable solutions for the insecurity in people’s minds, which is to practice according to the Buddha’s teachings.

2.4. Cultivating inner peace according to Buddha’s teachings

Taming and calming the mind is an important content in Buddhist teachings. Because according to the Buddha’s teachings, the mind can give birth to all dharmas, the mind is the master of the mind’s creations. The mastery of the mind here does not mean idealism like the schools of foreign philosophers. The mastery of the mind is because the mind is the source of happiness or suffering. If the mind is polluted, then painful words or actions will follow; but if the mind is pure, then peace will follow like the wheel follows the foot of the ox. Because the mind is the key to solving all problems, nurturing the mind and cultivating the mind is an important issue. In the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha taught:

(1) “I do not perceive even one other thing, O monks, that is so unwieldy as an undeveloped mind. An undeveloped mind is truly unwieldy.”

(2) “I do not perceive even one other thing, O monks, that is so wieldy as a developed mind. A developed mind is truly wieldy.”

(3). “I do not perceive even one other thing, O monks, that leads to such great harm as an undeveloped mind. An undeveloped mind leads to great harm.”

4. “I do not perceive even one other thing, O monks, that leads to such great benefit as a developed mind. A developed mind leads to great benefit.”

9. “I do not perceive even one other thing, O monks, that when undeveloped and uncultivated entails such great suffering as the mind. The mind when undeveloped and uncultivated entails great suffering.”

10. “I do not perceive even one other thing, O monks, that when developed and cultivated entails such great happiness as the mind. The mind when developed and cultivated entails great happiness.”⁵

⁴ Toại Khanh, Dịch, *Kinh nghiệm tuệ quán*, Nxb. Đồng Nai, 2021, tr. 501.

⁵ *Anguttara nikāya* (II.75), *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*. Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.)

The Buddha's Last Bequest says that: "Indulge the mind (with its desires) and you lose the benefit of being born a man; check it completely and there is nothing you will be unable to accomplish. That is the reason, O Bhikkhus, why you should strive hard to subdue your minds."⁶ That means if the mind is controlled in one place, there is nothing that cannot be done. In many sutras, the Buddha taught about methods to nurture the mind. Like a garden, if not weeded, plowed, cultivated, and fertilized, weeds will grow everywhere; but if that garden is fertilized, weeded, and cultivated, it will produce fragrant flowers and sweet grass. Likewise, if the mind is cultivated, nourished, treated, and transformed, the ordinary mind will become a holy mind; an impure, polluted mind will become a pure mind, a compassionate mind, a joyful and equanimous mind. There are many methods to nurture a peaceful mind; practitioners rely on these methods to create inner peace to build world peace.

The *Nikāyas* sometimes compare the process of training the mind to the taming of a wild animal. Or like a snake catcher must know how to use crutches so that the snake cannot bite. In *The Simile of the Snake Sutta* (*Alagaddupama Sutta*) the Buddha taught: "Suppose a man needing a snake, seeking a snake, wandering in search of a snake, saw a large snake and caught it rightly with a cleft stick, and having done so, grasped it rightly by the neck."⁷ Just as an animal trainer has to use various techniques to bring the animal under control, the meditator has to draw upon various methods to subdue the mind. It is not enough to be acquainted with one meditation technique; one must be skilled in some methods intended as antidotes to specific mental obstructions. In *Nikāya sutta* the Buddha explains five ancillary techniques, here called 'signs' (*nimitta*), that a monk might deploy to eliminate unwholesome thoughts connected with lust, hatred, and delusion. One who succeeds in overcoming distracting thoughts by the use of these techniques is called "a master of the courses of thought."⁸

Here, monks, when a monk is giving attention to some sign, and owing to that sign there arise in him evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion, then he should give attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome. When he gives attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, then any evil unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion are abandoned in him and subside. With their abandoning his mind becomes steadied internally, composed, unified, and concentrated.⁹

Wisdom publications, Boston, 2012, p. 254. AN 1: III, 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10; 15 – 6.

⁶ *The Buddha's Last Bequest*, A Translation from the Chinese Tipiṭaka, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy • Sri Lanka, The Wheel Publication No. 112, p. 7.

⁷ *A Translation of the Majjima Nikāya*, Bhikhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans). Wisdom Publication, Boston, p. 227.

⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi (ed.), *In the Buddha's words, An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*, Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2005, p.260.

⁹ *A Translation of the Majjima Nikāya*, Bhikhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans). Wisdom Publication, Boston, p. 221.

The Buddha taught that inner peace is not something far away, but can be achieved through practice and a deep understanding of oneself and life. Here are some important principles from the Buddha's teachings that help cultivate inner peace:

2.4.1. Practicing mindfulness: The Buddha advised us to always live in the present, to be mindful of all our thoughts, feelings and actions. Mindfulness, also known as present happiness, means the mind does not search for the past, does not desire the future, but resides in the present, then inner peace will be present. When we know how to pay attention to the present moment, we will not be caught up in worrying about the future or regretting the past, from which the soul becomes peaceful and light.

The important thing in practicing mindfulness is to keep the mind present right here and now. What is to be mindful here and now? To be mindful now is to know what era you are living in, then you need to adapt to that era. Don't let yourself be out of date and not catch up with the trends of the times. And here, you must know where you are living, in which country. Where are the cultural customs of that region, which country, and society have their laws? When we know this, we will live mindfully, that is, live following the law to survive and develop. The power of mindfulness can burn all distorted thoughts, control greed and anger, and create the energy of understanding and love, so that a peaceful mind is always present.

2.4.2. Practicing the four immeasurable minds: The four sublime states which are called *Brahmavihāra*, namely: pure love, (*mettā*), compassion, (*karuṇā*) sympathetic joy, (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) and these four principles constitute the moral and spiritual foundation of man, being at the same time real sources of peace and happiness.

Immeasurable love: Also known as loving-kindness, loving-kindness, calm, affectionate, and pleasant loving-kindness, is the opposite of anger. Immeasurable compassion: Is infinite compassion and sympathy, the medicine to cure the disease of cruelty and violence. Immeasurable joy: Is the sympathetic joy, delight in the happiness of others, in the success of a living being. Is a calm and happy state of mind. Joy is the opposite of sadness and worries, and tends to eliminate jealousy and envy. Immeasurable equanimity: Is the mind of letting go, not clinging to anything. Is giving up greed, selfishness, egoism, considering oneself the center. These four immeasurable minds combined create superior power in resolving problems and creating inner peace.

2.4.3. Contemplation of impermanence: Understand that everything in life is impermanent and nothing is permanent. This awareness helps us to be less attached to material things or negative emotions, thereby bringing inner peace.

2.4.4. Practice meditation: Meditation is an effective method to calm the mind, helping us to become more aware of ourselves, our emotions and thoughts. When the mind is focused and calm through meditation, anxiety and stress will decrease. Practicing meditation is to build a bank of consciousness, retain the water of wisdom, and gather the mind in one place, creating the

ability to nourish and develop increasingly sharp wisdom. Afflictions and defilements will gradually narrow and be eliminated.¹⁰

2.4.5. Let go of attachment: Buddha taught that many of life's troubles stem from attachment, the desire to possess or control things. When we learn to let go of expectations and attachments, we will feel lighter, and inner peace will naturally arise.

2.4.6. Illuminate your life with wisdom: True inner peace can only come when we develop wisdom, understand the nature of suffering and how to overcome it. The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path as a path to help us gain wisdom and be free from suffering.

Cultivating inner peace is a long process and requires patience. When we practice the Buddha's teachings in our daily lives, inner peace will gradually be established and become an indispensable part of our being.

2.5. The true value of sustainable peace

Peace is the fundamental and sole concern of Buddhism for individuals, communities and humanity. Buddhism has always been known as a religion for peace. Because the purpose of the birth of the Buddha was for the happiness and peace of the majority, for the happiness and peace of the Gods and humans. "Out of compassion for all sentient beings, and out of concern for the world. Bring benefits, happiness, and caring to gods and men."¹¹ Human history shows us that in the process of propagation, there has never been a war in the name of Buddhism. Therefore, wherever Buddhism goes, it brings peace, happiness and tranquility to people there. The opposite of peace is war, hatred, and conflict.

The human world is always insecure, war and hatred always exist. Therefore, cultivating inner peace for peace according to the Buddha's teachings is always of eternal value. From the Buddhist perspective, there are deep causes and internal causes that lead to violence and crime. For example, some issues are presented as follows:

2.5.1. Corrupt leadership and its harmful consequences to society and nature: In the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha explains:

Whenever, monks, unrighteous kings are present, then the king's unrighteous ministers are present. ... When the unrighteous householder brahmins are present, then the townspeople and the village people become unrighteous. When the townspeople and the village people are unrighteous, ...and conversely, when, monks, righteous kings are present, then the king's righteous ministers are present. ... then the townspeople and the village people become righteous...¹²

¹⁰ Thích Viên Giác, *Lược giải kinh Di Giáo*, <https://www.budsas.org/uni/u-kinhdigiao/digiao-01.htm>

¹¹ See, Hirakawa Akira, *A History of Indian Buddhism, From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, (trans and ed.) by Paul Groner, Motilal Banasidass, Delhi, 2007, p. 32.

¹² *Anguttara nikāya, The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), Wisdom publications, Boston, 2012, p. 457.

The sutta shows a connection between human moral behavior and changes occurring in the natural environment. The *Dharma* is the natural order. If it is disrupted by human wrongdoing, it is against the spirit of the *Dharma* as well as the precepts. This passage focuses on the responsibility of the country's leaders in maintaining moral standards to stabilize social morality. If a leader becomes corrupt and abuses power, it will cause discontent and disorder in society as well as the natural environment. On the contrary, if a leader lives honestly and righteously, morality and social order will naturally be established.

*In the Cakkavatti-sihanāda sutta, which belongs to the Dīgha Nikāya sutta, shows the relationship between morality and the economic conditions of the people. It shows that a major cause for the gradual decline of morality is poverty, economic disparity, and destitution. "Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of theft, the use of weapons increased, from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased - and from the increase in the taking of life, people's lifespan decreased."*¹³

It also shows that, through the revival of moral standards in society, the moral foundation will be established, social order and prosperity can be restored. "Then it will occur to those beings: "It is through having taken to wholesome practices that we have increased in life-span and beauty, so let us perform still more wholesome practices."¹⁴

The *Anguttara Nikāya*, chapter 3 of the *Dhamma*, the Brahmin section points out that the cause of poverty and destruction is that humans are intoxicated by illegal desires, conquered by evil desires, and dominated by wrong views. "At present, brahmin, people are excited by illicit lust, overcome by unrighteous greed, afflicted by wrong Dhamma.! As a result, they take up weapons and slay one another."¹⁵

Greed is a serious disease of all living beings. However, unjust greed is a great disaster for all mankind. Moral and economic crises... originate from unjust greed. When a person has an unjust greed, of course they are always manipulated by evil minds and cunning. They find ways to circumvent and find loopholes in the law to satisfy their greed. If many people intend to practice unjust greed, this is a danger that causes disputes and conflicts.

2.5.2. Peace, challenges and solutions: Poverty and wealth disparities, religious discrimination, racial discrimination, skin color discrimination... are the causes of social unrest and moral incidents in society. Peace is the desire of all people, because of peace people can live in peace, live fully and meaningfully.

¹³ *Dīgha nikāya, The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, Maurice Walshe (trans.), Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2012, p. 400.

¹⁴ *Dīgha nikāya, The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, Maurice Walshe (trans.), Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2012, p. 403.

¹⁵ *Anguttara nikāya (II.75), The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.), Wisdom publications, Boston, 2012, p. 254.

Sometimes, peace must be exchanged for blood and brain sacrifice. However, violence and crime will be a threat to peace. At the same time, only establishing a moral foundation is the most solid basis for protecting peace.

In modern society, peace has been and is the main issue along with issues like fairness, justice for all, and interrelationships. Therefore, peace should be its fair peace because there are things that look like peace, but in reality, there are many injustices that have taken place inside under the name of peace due to political factors. Therefore, for lasting peace, people are more concerned with fair peace than just peace.¹⁶

Human nature is a complex subject. It is therefore easy to come to a conjecture that conflict and war are natural. However, despite all the complexity in understanding and predicting the behavior of individuals and masses, the desire for lasting peace has emerged as one of the highest - if not the highest - goals of human civilization. The desire for peace, the absence of war and hatred is the greatest desire of human beings. However, today in many places in the world there is still violence and war. Every day, many civilians and children are still killed by bombs and bullets, many regions are divided by war, so that humanitarian aid cannot reach, leading to hunger, disease, and death. Achieving peace is a big subject. Generally, peace theories can be classified into the following two mechanisms:

1. Top down - using political, military, economic & cultural power.¹⁷
2. Bottom up - for example, voluntary peace by cultivating tolerance and changing mindsets.¹⁸

Both means of achieving peace emphasize the fact that conflict is natural. The top-down approach is like putting a rock on grass, the grass will temporarily not grow, but if conditions are right, it will grow back. An important difference is that the top-down approach cannot work unless there is power to control violence, while the “bottom-up” approach aims to make the situation more sustainable. The former approach is more conservative and aims at “negative peace” – simply the absence of war in which there is no active military violence taking place; while the latter is more comprehensive, aiming at positive peace, signifying the presence of justice, social order, as well as ecological harmony.¹⁹

According to some researchers, the bottom-up approach to building peace is very difficult. A few individuals may practice tolerance, love, and forgiveness,

¹⁶ Xem, TS. Young Ho Lee, Thích Nhật Từ, Thích Đức Thiện, Chủ biên, *Lãnh đạo bằng chánh niệm vì hòa bình bền vững*, Nxb. Hồng Đức, 2019, tr. 4.

¹⁷ Galtung, Johan, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Confit*, Development and Civilization, SAGE publications, New Delhi, 1996, p. 93.

¹⁸ Salomon & Nevo (Ed.), *Peace Education: The Concept, Principles, and Practices around the World*, edited by Gaviel Salomon, Baruch Nevo, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc New Jersey, 2002, p. 1.

¹⁹ Barash, David P & Webel, Charles P, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Third edition, SAGE publications, USA, 2013, p. 7.

but for the community, this is difficult to do. Therefore, war and hatred are difficult to end. However, human efforts are to want to build peace at any cost. Everyone understands that war is suffering, peace is happiness; war is poverty, peace is prosperity. Therefore, it is important to educate people on the foundation of morality and improve their knowledge as the foundation for building a peaceful society. When people live on the foundation of morality, love and respect for life, peace will exist for a long time.

According to Associate Professor Dr. Sandeep Chandrabhanji Nagarale, ethics and morality are the supreme values for human survival despite the superior intellectual technology. If the leaders do not awaken to ethics, the society they are ruling will remain dissatisfied and will never have a healthy life. Since the mental and physical health of an individual is very important for social harmony, leaders should perfect themselves by pursuing spiritual health to develop themselves with the help of Buddhist philosophy. Thus, a wise thinking process will bring harmony in the society for the common peace.²⁰

The true value of peace lies in the fact that it is not simply the absence of war and conflict, but a sustainable state where people live in peace, development and prosperity. Peace creates conditions for understanding, cooperation and mutual respect between nations, communities and individuals. Peace also helps free up energy and resources to focus on economic development, education, culture, and improving the quality of life. When no longer facing the threat of war, people can invest in human values such as empathy, love, and social justice. In addition, peace also brings psychological and emotional stability, helping each feel safe and able to live up to their potential, while contributing to the development of society.

2.6. Peace of mind will be peace of world

The law of dependent origination and the doctrine of interdependence in the Avatamsaka Sutra show that there is no separation between mind and matter. They both exist within each other, neither one nor different. Therefore, if the mind is impure, the Saha world, suffering, and affliction, will appear; if the mind is pure, the Pure Land of peace and joy will appear.

2.6.1. The mind is inherently pure and complete: From the Buddhist perspective, all phenomena are interrelated according to a certain law called the law of dependent origination. This doctrine also points out that all phenomena depend on each other, nothing exists independently and unchangingly. Between humans and the world, there is neither one nor different, between mind and matter is also identical.

There are two schools of philosophy: Idealism and Materialism. The idealist school of philosophy believes that mind comes before matter, and conversely, the materialist school of philosophy believes that matter determines consciousness. This debate has lasted for thousands of years and has yet to be resolved. Just like

²⁰ Xem, PGS.TS. Sandeep Chandrabhanji Nagarale, Thích Nhật Từ, Thích Đức Thiện, Chủ biên, *Lãnh đạo bằng Chánh niệm vì hòa bình bền vững*, Nxb. Hồng Đức, 2019, tr. 61.

the story of whether the chicken or the egg came first, there is still no answer. Buddhism is neither idealist nor materialist like other schools of philosophy. The theory of mutual existence and interpenetration according to the Avatamsaka Sutra and some other Mahayana Buddhist sutras shows us that mind and matter are neither the same nor different. In Buddhism, the distinction between mind and matter is only due to human perception, but when viewed from the perspective of truth (true nature), there is no such division. This is the view that mind and matter are one, meaning that mind and matter are different manifestations of a single reality. When we understand that there is no distinction between mind and matter, we will see the continuous and unceasing interaction between ourselves and the world around us, avoiding attachment to a separate self or the division between self and others, subject and object.

This view helps Buddhist practitioners attain liberation from all ego-clinging (attachment to a separate self) and clearly see the nature of reality as egoless, impermanent, and nothing fixed. In daily life, understanding the unity of mind and matter helps people clearly perceive that nothing exists independently, everything is closely related to each other. From there, we have a more harmonious attitude towards the environment and people around us, avoiding opposition, conflict or attachment to the self. Thus, Buddhism does not stand on the side of idealism or materialism, but believes that both mind and matter are just two aspects of a single, unified reality, and they are both phenomena of dependent origination and impermanence.

The story of not the moving flag or the wind but the moving mind in the Platform Sutra (法寶壇經) is pointed out by the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng, who shows us that the core of all movement and stillness in this world comes from the mind. The story of the “moving flag” in the Platform Sutra (法寶壇經) is one of the famous Zen stories, emphasizing enlightenment and the nature of the mind. This is the story when the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng came to the temple and witnessed a debate between two monks standing in front of a flag and arguing. One said, “The flag is moving,” meaning that the flag was fluttering in the wind. The other said, “The wind is moving,” assuming that the wind was what was making the flag sway. The two sides could not agree with each other and continued to argue. At this time, the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng happened to pass by and heard the debate. He then said, “It is not the flag that is moving, nor the wind that is moving, but your minds that are moving.” The Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng’s point here is to point out that all external movements originate from the human mind. The moving flag or the moving wind are all phenomena that we perceive through the mind. When the mind is not moved, we clearly see the true nature of everything without being attached to external phenomena.

In the *Dhammapada sutta*, it says that: “Mind is the forerunner of (all good). Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one’s shadow that never leaves.”²¹

²¹ Kinh Pháp Cú (Dhammapada) Đa ngữ: Việt - Anh - Pháp - Đức, Dịch Việt: Hòa thượng

This story profoundly illustrates Zen thought, emphasizing the role of the mind in perceiving and understanding the world. When our mind is agitated, we perceive everything in a confused and biased way. But when the mind is calm, enlightenment can be achieved. And at this point we are no longer dependent on matter, the mind moves things, but things cannot move the mind. The nature of the mind is as it is, unmoving, neither born nor destroyed, neither increasing nor decreasing, neither dirty nor clean.

Therefore, the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng, having realized his original nature, exclaimed: “Who would have thought that self-nature is inherently pure, Who would have thought that self-nature is inherently neither born nor destroyed, Who would have thought that self-nature is inherently complete, Who would have thought that self-nature is inherently unmoving, Who would have thought that self-nature can give birth to all dharmas.”²²

The mind is inherently present, so the movement and stillness outside are just appearances, the core is still in the mind. Buddhism focuses on nurturing the mind because the mind is the root, turning inward to control oneself is the only way to solve the root of all problems. Because “Whenever the mind is pure, the Buddha’s land is pure” or “The Pure Land is a pure heart, Amitabha is the bright nature”. When the mind is pure, the scenery becomes peaceful and beautiful, when the mind always has Buddha in it, everyone looks lovely, but when the mind is a demon, everyone looks hateful. When the mind has the energy of compassion and wisdom, it will refresh one’s own life and bring peace and happiness to everyone around. At that time, wherever you look, you can see flowers, even when the flowers are trash. If you allow growing unlovable seeds, seeds of anger, jealousy, selfishness, competition... then wherever you look, you will see dirt. On the contrary, if we know how to nurture and develop the seeds of compassion, joy, equanimity, love, sympathy, forgiveness... then we will see everyone as lovely, see the Pure Land, see Buddha everywhere.²³ Indeed, inside us there are very mysterious things that we have not yet discovered.

2.6.2. Building world peace with merit and wisdom: Amitabha Buddha established the Western Pure Land by clearing the mind of greed, anger, and ignorance, and that land does not have the three evil paths: hell, hungry ghosts, and animals. He was King Vo Tran Niem, who left home with the Buddha, The Tu Tai, and became the monk Pháp Tạng. Vo Tran Niem means not arguing or competing with others in the mind. The world likes to argue, fight, and compete. If your mind is pure, then why get caught up in those rumors?

Buddha The Tu Tai means that he is always at ease amid life. No matter what happens in life, he is always at ease, his mind is still and unmoved amid life’s

Thích Thiện Siêu, Bản dịch Anh ngữ: Hòa thượng NARADA, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1963, 1971.

²² Lục Tổ Huệ Năng, *Kinh Pháp Bảo Đàn*, Tỳ Kheo Thích Duy Lực Dịch và Lược Giải, Từ Ân Thiền Đường, Santa Ana Xuất bản, 1992, <https://thuvienhoasen.org/p16a687/pham-co-duyen-thu-bay>.

²³ Thích Nguyên Đạt, *Tô Đông Pha Và Thiên Sư Phật Ấn*, <https://thuvienhoasen.org/a15429/to-dong-pha-va-thien-su-phat-an-thich-nguyen-da>, 25/10/2024.

changes. The Buddhas of the three periods often use conduct as their name, not a title in the usual sense. From King Vo Tranh Niem to becoming Bhikkhu Pháp Tạng thanks to studying with Buddha The Tu Tai is a process of transforming consciousness, nurturing consciousness. Nurturing consciousness with *Dharma*, using Buddha's *Dharma* to wash away worldly thoughts. In the mind, nourished by *Dharma* and nothing else, until it is deeply rooted, it is called Pháp Tạng. Therefore, the world of which he is the master is completely peaceful and pure, no longer hearing the names of the three evil paths, let alone suffering in the three evil paths. That world, even the sound of the streams and the chirping of birds, is also with the wonderful sound of *Dharma*, making people always remember the Buddha, *Dharma*, and Sangha. Because it is built on the foundation of a mind without greed, without anger and ignorance, with immeasurable merit and wisdom, it is called the Pure Land.

By taking the model of the Western Paradise, we can establish peace and tranquility for this Saha world. Amitabha Buddha wanted to create the Pure Land to help calm the mind, while Shakyamuni Buddha wanted to establish inner peace first, then the world would be peaceful. The two Buddhas had two different ways of doing things, but they led to the same goal: both the mind and the scene would be peaceful. When people's hearts are nourished by love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, and greed, anger, and ignorance are eliminated, then the impure land will become the pure land. Because "Hatred never ceases through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law."²⁴ If you use hatred to destroy hatred, hatred will increase. Only compassion, love and forgiveness can eliminate hatred.

2.6.3. Building peace based on the fundamental foundation of Buddhist moral education: In the Buddhist scriptures, it is explained that morality or ethics have the characteristic of harmony in the three karmas of body, speech, and mind. Morality brings harmony in actions, brings personal benefits, brings happiness to individuals, and the community. All actions that go against the spirit of morality cause feelings of guilt, anxiety, and regret. On the contrary, those who practice according to the moral foundation will lead to no regret, joy, and happiness. Ven. Buddhaghosa in *Visuddhimagga* as follows: "Such virtues lead to non-remorse in the mind, to gladdening, to happiness, to tranquillity, to joy, to repetition, to development, to cultivation, to embellishment, to the requisite [for concentration], to the equipment [of concentration], to fulfilment, to complete dispassion, to fading away, to cessation, to peace, to direct-knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna."²⁵

Moral education is the first fundamental step, because without morality, people will be ruined and have no value in life, even if they have talent

²⁴ *Kinh Pháp Cú (Dhammapada)* Đa ngữ: Việt - Anh - Pháp - Đức, Dịch Việt: Hòa thượng Thích Thiện Siêu, Bản dịch Anh ngữ: Hòa thượng NARADA, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1963, 1971. <https://thuvienhoasen.org/p15a10355/01-pham-song-yeu-twin-verses-01-20>.

²⁵ See, Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhi Magga*, Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli (trans.), *The Path of Purification*, Buddhist Publication Society, Colombo, 2010, p. 48.

and intelligence. According to Buddhism, morality is the first step to have concentration and wisdom. Building a building without a solid foundation will cause the house to collapse, similarly, educating people must be based on a moral foundation for long-term sustainable development. Therefore, whether the world has peace or not depends on moral education and inner cultivation.

2.6.4. Self-conquest: According to Buddhism, self-conquest is the core and key issue and the key to solving all problems. True power does not come from external victory, but from victory over one's emotions, desires, and limitations. This is a more difficult victory, but it brings inner peace and freedom, because when one masters oneself, one truly masters one's life. This reminds us that, instead of spending energy fighting with others, invest in training, controlling, and perfecting oneself. After the victory at Kalinga, Emperor Ashoka looked back at the corpses under his sword and was startled to awaken. After that, he took refuge in the Triple Gem and protected Buddhism. He, from an evil king to a kind king.

In short, when our mind is calm, not disturbed by greed, anger, ignorance or negative emotions, the way we perceive and face the world also becomes peaceful. Whether the outside world is peaceful or not depends a lot on how our mind reacts to it. When our mind is peaceful and pure, all problems in life seem to become easier and lighter. The peace from within will spread to the outside, positively affecting everyone and everything around. This emphasizes that all peace starts from within each person. Instead of trying to change the world, focus on changing your mind, because "happiness comes from within".

III. CONCLUSION

When nourished by mindfulness, compassion, meditation, letting go and wisdom, the inner mind will be peaceful and stable. Life is always a continuous flow without stopping, the ups and downs of life will sometimes make us confused and afraid. Some things are not scary but we are afraid, not worth worrying about but we are worried about, not worth being sad about, angry but we are sad about, that anger is because the inner self is not stable, not peaceful. With mindfulness and wisdom, no matter what life is like, we will not be sad, angry, afraid, and worried, but will always be calm and composed to handle all matters properly. Therefore, the Dharma of Buddha always has eternal value, transcending time, helping people establish inner peace, leading to world peace.

The story of Huike's "peace of mind" is one of the famous anecdotes in Zen Buddhism, helping students understand more deeply the nature of the mind and the method of practice. The story happened when Huike sought guidance from Bodhidharma, hoping to be guided to "peace of mind."

Huike said: "Master, my mind is not at peace, please calm my mind."

Bodhidharma replied: "Bring your mind here, I will calm it for you."

Huike searched for his mind but could not find it, so he said: "I searched for my mind and could not find it." Bodhidharma said: "I have calmed your mind."

The story carries a profound meaning about recognizing the nature of the mind that “mind” has no form, cannot be grasped or found, because the mind is not a fixed or separate thing. Second, peace of mind does not need to be sought: When Huike realized that he could not find the mind, he saw that peace of mind does not come from the outside or from someone else, but from understanding the empty, egoless nature of oneself. And thirdly, it is the spirit of breaking attachment to concepts and ideas. When Huike stopped clinging to the idea of an “unsettled mind” that needed to be “pacified”, he truly found true peace of mind. Therefore, peace of mind lies in letting go of all searching and holding, when we stop clinging to the “I” or ideas about ourselves, then peace of mind exists.

When people’s minds are peaceful and calm, they are not easily agitated by desires, jealousy or excessive ambition. When each individual has inner peace, this creates a harmonious community with less conflict, contributing to a more peaceful world. In other words, the world is a reflection of each individual in society. To have peace and happiness on a global scale, each person needs to start with themselves, cultivating peace and well-being from within. This way of life will create a positive resonance, spreading peace and harmony throughout the world.

An important suggestion in Buddhism is to encourage people who want to have true peace, in addition to practicing ‘minimum desire and contentment’, to understand the concept of ‘fortune and destiny’. If everyone has a correct view of themselves in terms of their accumulated conditions (blessings), their family fortune (fortune), their health, their longevity (life) and their social status (position) and acts accordingly, they will be very peaceful. Don’t be too ambitious beyond what your conditions allow, then your life will always be peaceful.

Through this forum, we propose several solutions to contribute to building a sustainable world peace:

- (1) Encourage and practice mindfulness so that people can control their behavior.
- (2) Educate to practice compassion, listening and understanding to convey loving energy to everyone.
- (3) Enhance dialogue, harmony and reconciliation to resolve current conflicts.
- (4) Restrict and control information that incites violence, hatred and division; respect people’s right to privacy and equality.

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BUDDHIST PRACTICE RESPONSE TO SORROW: APPLICATION OF *ĀNĀPĀNASSATI* MEDITATION

Ven. Vicitta*

Abstract:

There are numerous distinct perspectives in the *Pāli* Buddhist tradition regarding *soka* (sorrow). In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha illuminated the following statement concerning *soka* while introducing the First Noble Truth (*dukkha ariyasacca*): “Sorrow, sorrowing, the state of sorrow, inner sorrow, inner deep sorrow in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering.” Additionally, *soka* is examined within the broader concept of *dukkha*. The conception of *soka* is also observed in *dukkha* as follows: “Birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are suffering; association with the disliked, separation from the liked, and not getting what one wishes for is suffering; in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering.” Nevertheless, the question that needs to be addressed is: how can breathing meditation be developed and cultivated in daily life to eliminate sorrow and calm the mind as a crucial aspect of practice? The significance of *soka* will be discussed in a manner consistent with the *Pāli* Canon, pertinent commentaries, and related scholarly works. As a result, this study will conduct a qualitative and descriptive analysis to investigate the nature of *soka*, explore the theoretical frameworks that Buddhism provides, and evaluate the practical applications of these frameworks for living happily and peacefully. The research aims to establish a connection between the level of *soka* and *taṇhā* (craving). Therefore, the study places a strong emphasis on the role of *soka* as a foundation for the daily application of breathing meditation to overcome sorrow.

The purpose of this study is to provide practical guidance on *vipassanā* meditation for individuals seeking the Noble Truth and the cessation of sorrow. Our objective in conducting this inquiry is to demonstrate that Buddhist teachings are both relevant and useful in understanding the nature of sorrow and the conditions that lead to it.

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Keywords: *Ānāpānasati, Soka, Taṇhā, Vipassanā, Saccā.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Sorrow is a global mental health issue today and a widespread psychological condition affecting people worldwide. Various studies have emerged in response to this critical issue, and observers agree that the number of sorrowful individuals is increasing every year. Sorrow can be classified as a form of psychological distress and is an unpleasant mental state caused by underlying afflictions that disrupt the balance of the mind. In Buddhism, an unpleasant mental state is identified as sorrow (*soka*), which denotes suffering (*dukkha*).¹ *Soka* should also be understood in conjunction with hatred. Sorrow frequently arises in the hearts of people today. It emerges due to the death of loved ones, loss of wealth, misfortunes, and the departure of friends - all such sorrow is referred to as *soka*.² Therefore, sorrow manifests in many forms and disrupts daily life.

This paper examines whether and how sorrow can be prevented and overcome through the contemplation of mindfulness breathing (*ānāpāna* meditation). Therefore, when studying how Buddhist practice responds to sorrow, it is necessary to explore the daily application of *Ānāpānasati* meditation. This research aims to provide insights into how breathing meditation can be developed and cultivated in daily life to eliminate sorrow and calm the mind as a crucial aspect of practice. Additionally, this study will conduct a qualitative and descriptive analysis to investigate the nature of *soka* and its significance as depicted in the *Pāli* Canonical Texts, their respective commentaries, and other scholarly works.

II. SORROW AS A GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

Today, as people's creativity and ability to innovate have advanced in many areas, sorrow has also increased exponentially. The rapid and intense confrontations in economic, social, and war-torn fields are major causes of sorrow. Thus, sorrow is regarded as one of the most significant diagnoses in global mental health issues.

For a diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder, the loss of a loved one must have occurred at least one year ago for adults and at least six months ago for children and adolescents. In addition, the grieving individual must have experienced at least three of the symptoms below nearly every day for at least the past month before the diagnosis. These symptoms include: (1) Identity disruption (such as feeling as though part of oneself has died), (2) Marked sense of disbelief about the death, (3) Avoidance of reminders that the person is dead, (4) Intense emotional pain (such as anger, bitterness, sorrow) related to the death, (5) Difficulty with reintegration (such as problems engaging with friends, pursuing interests, or planning for the future), (6) Emotional numbness

¹ D. II 305; M. III 250.

² *Janakābhivamsa* (1997): 48.

(absence or marked reduction of emotional experience), (7) Feeling that life is meaningless, (8) Intense loneliness (feeling alone or detached from others).³

Szuhany, K. L. states that an estimated 7% - 10% of bereaved adults will experience persistent symptoms of prolonged grief disorder. Moreover, Melhem, N. M. illustrates that among children and adolescents who have lost a loved one, approximately 5% - 10% will experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and/or prolonged grief disorder following bereavement.⁴ Recent studies present that sorrow can affect people of all ages and is most common in those who have lost loved ones, possessions, or friends. Elderly people, in particular, are at a higher risk of experiencing sorrow when left alone. This study explores how to prevent the emergence of sorrow promptly and how to quickly eliminate it in accordance with the guidance of the Buddha.

III. INTERPRETATIONS OF SORROW

The Pāli term *soka*, usually translated as sorrow, grief, woe, anxiety, worry, or intense pain, is known as one of the key factors in the teachings of the Buddha. It is also included in the twelve *dukkhas*⁵ and Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).⁶ According to the teaching of the Buddha, *soka* is an unwholesome state of mind and is like a flame of fire that burns people. Likewise, it is also like a dart that pierces people's hearts. It can refer to an unpleasant state or bitter pain. It is a form of mental pain that can be caused by loss, misfortune, or painful experiences. Unhappiness due to negative events is called sorrow. Whenever sorrow occurs, hatred is also present. Therefore, sorrow should be understood in relation to hatred. Sorrow often arises in the hearts of people today. Sorrow is due to the death of relatives, the loss of wealth, and the loss of friends.

According to the *Mahāsatiipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta*, *soka* is sorrow, sorrowing, a state of sorrow, inner sorrow, and deep inner sorrow in someone who has undergone misfortune or experienced suffering.⁷ The *Vibhaṅga*, one of the seven books of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, further explains *soka* as the sorrow experienced by one afflicted by misfortune through relatives, wealth, disease, corrupted morality, or wrong views. It refers to the state of one afflicted by misfortune or painful experiences - sorrow, being sorry, the state of being sorry, inner sorrow, deep sorrow, burning of the mind, mental pain,

³ American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR). American Psychiatric Association Publishing. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>

⁴ Melhem, N. M., Porta, G., Walker Payne, M., & Brent, D. A. (2013). *Identifying prolonged grief reactions in children: dimensional and diagnostic approaches*. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 52(6), 599–607.e7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2013.02.015>

⁵ D. II 305 - 6; M. III 250.

⁶ S. II 2.

⁷ D. II 305 - 6; M. III 250.

and the arrow of sorrow.⁸ Thus, *soka* signifies the loss of something or some destruction, a state of suffering that lacks freedom, a sorrowful condition, inner sorrow, and deep inner sorrow in one who has faced suffering. Furthermore, sorrow arises from various forms of loss - the loss of relatives, wealth, health, morals, or doctrine (due to false views).

IV. CAUSES OF SORROW

The cause of sorrow is normally craving (*taṇhā*). The *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta* point out that the three types of craving are the cause of continued becoming, accompanied by passionate lust and strong desire for this and that. These are: craving for sense pleasures (*kāmatāṇhā*), craving for becoming (*bhavataṇhā*), and craving for non-becoming (*vibhavataṇhā*).⁹ Likewise, five causes of sorrow (*dukkha*), according to the analysis in the *Abhidhamma* (*Abhidhammabhājanīya*), are: (1) How craving alone is declared to be the truth of the origin of suffering, (2) How the ten defilements are declared to be the truth of the origin of suffering, (3) How all unwholesome states are declared to be the truth of the origin of suffering, (4) How all unwholesome states and the three worldly defilements are declared to be the truth of the origin of suffering, (5) How all worldly wholesome and unwholesome states are declared to be the truth of the origin of suffering.¹⁰

On the other hand, the *Titthāyatana Sutta* and *Paṭiccasamuppāda Sutta* state: “With ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering.” This means *dukkha-samudaya* is described in twelve ways. According to these three interpretations, it is clear that the way *dukkha-samudaya* is explained in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* differs from the interpretation found in the *Titthāyatana Sutta* and *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta*. Furthermore, the *Pāsarāsi Sutta* states that certain subjects are prone to sorrow: “Wife and children are subject to sorrow; men and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses, and mares are subject to sorrow.”¹¹

V. THE PRACTICE OF ĀNĀPĀNASSATI MEDITATION IN THERAVĀDA TRADITION

5.1. Interpretations of Ānāpānassati

⁸ *Vibbaṅga*. 100.

⁹ *Vibbaṅga*. 99 - 106.

¹⁰ *Vibbaṅga*. 107 - 112.

¹¹ *M. I* 162.

Ānāpānassati is mindfulness of breathing in and out. It is divided into *ānāpāna* and *sati*. The *Pāli* term *ānāpāna* can be translated as breathing in and out; in-breath and out-breath; inhaling and exhaling in English. In the *suttas*, *āna* is breathing in (*assāsa*), and *apāna* is breathing out (*passāsa*).¹² On the other hand, in the *Vinaya*, *assāsa* is the in-going breath, and *passāsa* is the out-going breath.¹³ If these breaths do not exist, people in the world consider a person dead. However, even though they do not breathe in and out, certain beings cannot be called dead. Seven types of beings do not breathe in and out, as follows: (1) one inside the mother's womb, (2) one who has drowned in water, (3) one who is an unconscious being, (4) one who is dead, (4) one who has attained the fourth *jhāna*, (5) one who is born into a fine-material or immaterial existence, and (5) one who has attained cessation.¹⁴

The word *sati* (mindfulness) is derived from the root of the verb *sāraṭi* (remember), but it refers to mindfulness in the present moment rather than recalling the past. Occasionally, this *sati*, which means memory, is used in the teachings of the Buddha. The formal description of *sati* as mindfulness is also found in the discourse on the highest distinguishing mindfulness.

The Buddha recommended Ānanda, who was honored for his incredible work of memorizing all the teachings that the Buddha had ever preached, to be a model of virtue among the Buddha's disciples. According to this definition of *sati*, if there is *sati*, memory can function well. However, when it comes to the practice of meditation, there is no English word that can fully capture its meaning. Translators of *sati* have chosen words such as mindfulness, awareness, inspection, recollection, and retention; they have used these terms judiciously. The *Pāli* term *sati* means both mindfulness and memory.

Ānāpānassati, which is the act of paying attention to the breath, means mindfulness of breathing in and out. It is an essential form of Buddhist meditation attributed to the Buddha and described in several *suttas*, especially the *Ānāpānasati-sutta* and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*. Mindfulness of in-and-out breathing meditation is the first meditation subject taught by the Buddha in the *Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness*. The Buddha placed special emphasis on this meditation because it is the gateway to *Nibbāna*, a path followed by all previous Buddhas.

The forty kinds of *samatha* meditation include ten kinds of *kasina*, ten kinds of *asubha*, ten kinds of *anussati*, four kinds of *brahmavihāra*, four kinds of *āruppa*, *āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*, and *catudhātuvavatthāna*. *Ānāpānassati* is included among the ten kinds of *anussati*. The *Visuddhimagga* states: "*idaṃ (ānāpānassatikammaṭṭhānaṃ) kammaṭṭhānappabhede muddhabhūtaṃ*,"¹⁵ meaning that mindfulness of breathing meditation is considered the foremost of all meditation subjects. This indicates that it is the highest among the forty

¹² *Visuddhimagga (Vism)* I 219. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, 2010, p. 264.

¹³ *Vism* I 219. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, 2010, p. 264

¹⁴ *Paṭi-sa* II 97. *Pārā-sa* II 28. *Vism* I 279.

¹⁵ *Paṭi-sa* II 489, *Vism* I 261.

kinds of meditation.

The *Ānāpānasati-sutta*¹⁶ mentions sixteen kinds of breathing in and out: breathing in long and out long, breathing in short and out short, experiencing the whole body of breath while breathing in and out, calming the bodily formation while breathing in and out, etc. A significant concept in this *sutta* states:

“Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness. When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfill the seven enlightenment factors. When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfill true knowledge and deliverance.”¹⁷

Similarly, the *Paṭhamaphala-sutta* states that when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, one can expect one of two results: enlightenment in this very life, or, if there is something left to be purified, *anāgāmita* (non-return). Furthermore, the *Dutiyaphala-sutta* mentions that when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, one can expect seven fruits and benefits: enlightenment early in this very life, enlightenment at the time of death, if not, extinction between one life and the next, if not, with the ending of the five lower fetters, extinction upon landing, extinction without extra effort, extinction with extra effort, and heading upstream to the *Akaniṭṭha* realm.

The *Visuddhimagga* states that when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it greatly benefits the attainment of the fifth *jhāna*. *Satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā* is a more elaborate version of *ānāpānassati-bhāvanā*. Therefore, it is important to learn the correct method of practicing *ānāpānassati*. If *ānāpānassati* is practiced correctly, it can easily transform into *satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā*. According to this concept, breathing in and out is described as an essential meditation practice for reaching *magga*, *phala*, and *Nibbāna*.

5.2. Classification of *Ānāpānassati*

Ānāpānassati meditation (breathing in and out) is one of the forty meditations for attaining *samādhi*. The *Ānāpānasati-sutta* illustrates sixteen stages of mindfulness of breathing meditation. They are divided into four tetrads (i.e., four groups of four).

The first four stages are mindfulness of breathing, which is the contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*). The second tetrad is mindfulness of breathing, which is the contemplation of feeling (*vedanānupassanā*). The third tetrad consists of mindfulness of breathing, which is the contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*). The fourth tetrad is mindfulness of breathing, which is the contemplation of mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*). While the *Ānāpānasati-sutta* describes four groups of four, the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta* reveals only the first tetrad as follows: (1) Breathing in long, he understands: “I breathe in long”; or breathing out long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” (2) Breathing in short, he understands: “I breathe in short”; or breathing out

¹⁶ M. III 79 - 88.

¹⁷ S. V 237.

short, he understands: “I breathe out short.” (3) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body of breath”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body of breath.” (4) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the bodily formation”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the bodily formation.”¹⁸

The four groups of mindfulness of the first stage (observation of the body) are mindfulness of four aspects of breathing: breathing in and out, breathing in long and out long, breathing in short and out short, realizing the breaths, and calming the breaths. A practitioner of mindfulness of the breath should first distinguish between the two stages of mindfulness involved in breathing. However, in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, there are nine methods related to the first two stages. In addition, there are eight methods related to the four stages of mindfulness found in the *Visuddhimagga*: (1) *Gananā* (counting), (2) *Anubandhanā* (following the process with mindfulness), (3) *Phusanā* (noting the contact of the breaths), (4) *Thapanā* (applying the mind to the sign), (5) *Sallakkhanā* (contemplating the characteristic marks), (6) *Vivattaṇā* (transition of the mind from the lower consciousness to the higher), (7) *Pārisuddhi* (purification or experiencing the fruit), (8) *Patissanā* (reflecting on the attainments).¹⁹ Therefore, based on these explanations, we can understand the methods described in the *Visuddhimagga*. Furthermore, the second tetrad (contemplation of feeling) consists of four aspects of the second *ānāpānassati*: experiencing joy, experiencing happiness, experiencing mental formations, and tranquilizing mental formations. Two techniques are used: the development of *ānāpānassati* meditation and the development of *vedanānupassanā*.

The *Ānāpānasati-sutta* describes the second tetrad as follows: (1) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing rapture”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing rapture.” (2) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure.” (3) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation.” (4) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the mental formation”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the mental formation.” The third tetrad (contemplation of the mind) presents four aspects of the third *ānāpānassati*: realizing the mind, gladdening the mind, concentrating the mind, and releasing the mind. Two methods can be developed: the development of *ānāpānassati* meditation and the development of *cittānupassanā*.

The *Ānāpānasati-sutta* describes the third tetrad as follows: (1) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence.” (2) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating fading away”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out contemplating fading away.” (3) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating

¹⁸ M. III 82; D. II 290.

¹⁹ *Vism* I 270.

cessation”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out contemplating cessation.” (4) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the mental formation”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the mental formation.” The fourth tetrad (contemplation of *Dhammas*) consists of four aspects of the fourth *ānāpānassati*: contemplating transitoriness, discerning freedom from passion, discerning cessation, and discerning renunciation. Two methods can be developed: the development of *ānāpānassati* meditation and the development of *dhammānupassanā*.

The *Ānāpānasati-sutta* describes the fourth tetrad as follows: (1) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the mind”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the mind.” (2) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in gladdening the mind”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out gladdening the mind.” (3) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in concentrating the mind”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out concentrating the mind.” (4) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in liberating the mind”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out liberating the mind.” While the *Ānāpānassati-sutta* presents mindfulness of breathing meditation in sixteen ways, the *Kāyānupassanā* section in the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna-sutta* describes only four. The first step of the four-group practice relates to mindfulness of the contemplative body. Consequently, these four groups form the foundation for those who practice meditation.

5.3. Eighteen imperfections on breathing meditation

Ānāpāna practice, developed based on breathing, is a meditation subject. The nature of breathing in and out (air) is soft and smooth, but sometimes it is difficult to perceive. A meditator who practices mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing can attain the fourth *jhāna* state. When this occurs, their minds become very peaceful and calm at these levels.

However, certain imperfections may arise in the mind during this *Ānāpāna* practice. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* mentions the following eighteen imperfections:

The first six defects are: (1) Mindfulness running after the in-breath, (2) Mindfulness running after the out-breath, (3) Mindfulness expecting distraction inwardly, (4) Mindfulness loving distraction outwardly, (5) Mindfulness longing for the out-breath in one who is fatigued by the in-breath, and (5) Mindfulness longing for the in-breath in one who is fatigued by the out-breath.

The second six defects are: (1) Adverting to the sign while the mind is still distracted by the in-breath, (2) Adverting to the in-breath while the mind can still be shaken by the sign, (3) Adverting to the sign while the mind is still distracted by the out-breath, (4) Adverting to the out-breath while the mind can still be shaken by the sign, (5) Adverting to the in-breath while the mind is still distracted by the out-breath, (6) Adverting to the out-breath while the mind can still be shaken by the in-breath.

The third six defects are: (1) The mind that hunts the past, (2) The mind that loves the future, (3) The slack mind, (4) The mind that is over-exerted, (5)

The mind that is enticed, (6) The mind that is repelled and unconcentrated.²⁰

There are eighteen imperfections that people who develop mindfulness of breathing can experience during meditation. Therefore, the meditators should carefully practice not to enter into defilements that hinder concentration.

5.4. *Ānāpānassati* meditation in Buddhist perspective

Ānāpānassati is a primary subject of meditation. Mindfulness of breathing meditation is one of the most unique and effective techniques for rapidly developing concentration. It is also one of the most widely used methods for cultivating mindfulness.

In Buddhist literature, there are four ways to describe *ānāpānassati*. The *Ānāpānassati-sutta* explains it through four methods: the first tetrad, the second tetrad, the third tetrad, and the fourth tetrad. Similarly, the *Girimānanda-sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and some of the twenty *suttas* in the *Ānāpāna Saṃyutta* mention *ānāpānassati* meditation in four ways. However, the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna-sutta* mentions only one method, which is the first tetrad.

There are sixteen mindfulness meditations described in the *Ānāpānassati-sutta*, whereas the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna-sutta* only presents the first four. If one practices according to the Buddha's teachings, one can develop and attain wisdom through the fourth *jhāna* in the fourfold method or the fifth *jhāna* in the fivefold method. The Buddha himself recommended this as the perfect way to reach *Nibbāna*.

5.4.1. Mindfulness of breathing in and out

The constant mindfulness of breathing in long and out long, by the gentle brushing of the breath either at the nostrils or the upper lip, is an important step in *ānāpānassati* meditation. A meditator who has gone into the wilderness²¹ to practice breathing meditation should follow the Buddha's instructions on what to do first before meditating. He or she should learn the subject of meditation from a capable teacher and find a suitable, quiet place to meditate, taking care to ensure that noise does not disrupt awareness of breathing. In group meditation, each meditator should remain completely silent. The meditator should sit comfortably, either in a relaxed position or cross-legged on a mat or chair. All muscles should be relaxed, and the body and head should be kept erect. During meditation, one should not move any part of the body. However, if there is unbearable pain, one may change posture gently and mindfully while remaining aware of the breath. Even then, one should tolerate physical discomfort as much as possible before adjusting position.

The hands should be placed on the thighs or legs, and if possible, the right hand should be turned over the left hand with the palms facing up. The meditator should close his or her eyes and breathe normally while remaining aware of where the breath is being felt. For someone with a long nose, the breath may touch the tip of the nose. If the nose is of normal length, the breath

²⁰ *Paṭi* I 166 - 7.

²¹ *D.* II 292.

may touch both nostrils when breathing through the nose. For someone with a short nose, the breath may touch the upper lip. The most important aspect of this contact is to focus the mind on the exact point where the in-breath and out-breath touch and to remain aware of the breath as it gently rubs against that point. An important question arises: Should one focus on breathing or on the sensation of touch? The answer is that one should always focus on the breath itself. *Ānāpānassati* is mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing. If one focuses on the sensation of touch, one is not meditating on mindfulness of breathing but on another meditation object.

Moreover, there is no need to label the breath as ‘in-breathing’ and ‘out-breathing’ or to mentally note ‘in, out.’ The meditator simply needs to observe the in-breath and out-breath continuously. However, if one cannot concentrate without labeling, one may initially note ‘breathing in, breathing out’ at the very first stage of practice. Another important requirement is to focus on the breath at the point of contact and not to follow it as it enters or leaves the nose. If one follows the breath into the nose, the mind will not reach a state of one-pointedness, delaying the development of concentration.

Similarly, one should not focus on bodily sensations such as pain, itching, or numbness that arise during mindfulness of breathing meditation. The mind can only be aware of one thing at a time. If the meditator is concentrating well, these sensations will not be noticed. If distractions arise, it means the mind has shifted its attention elsewhere. The meditator should not be overly concerned with physical pain or discomfort. One should practice endurance and ignore minor discomforts while continuing to develop mindfulness of breathing meditation. When concentration deepens, pain will no longer be noticed. If the pain becomes unbearable, one may mindfully change posture to relieve it, but one should never change posture without mindfulness.

Another key point is that the mind should not wander to other sensory objects but should remain constantly focused on the in-breath and out-breath. If the mind drifts away, it should be brought back to the breath as soon as awareness of the distraction arises. The Buddha warned that the mind is very subtle and fast-moving, making it difficult to control. Various obstacles may cause it to tremble. However, when disciplined, the mind leads to human happiness, celestial happiness, and even *Nibbānic* happiness. When the meditator’s breath touches the nostrils or upper lip, he should cultivate the mind by focusing on the in-breath and out-breath. Every time he meditates, he should remain steadily mindful of the in-breath and out-breath for half an hour, an hour, or longer. Each session should be devoted to calming the meditating mind. Therefore, the *Visuddhimagga* states: “Only if the meditator practices *ānāpānassati* by establishing his mindfulness on the breath at the point of distinct contact with the in-breath and out-breath will *ānāpānassati* concentration and meditation be fully accomplished in him.”²² The first essential step in mindfulness of breathing meditation is to continuously

²² *Vism* I 271.

observe one's inhale and exhale by gently focusing on the breath as it touches the nostrils or upper lip.

5.4.2. How to count to control mind

A meditator who cannot fix his mind on the in-breath and out-breath for half an hour or an hour should apply the eight methods as illuminated in the *Visuddhimagga*. The counting method, one of these eight methods, is particularly useful and effective. To address the problem of a restless meditating mind, the *Visuddhimagga* suggests using the counting method as follows: (1) In-breath, out-breath - one, (2) In-breath, out-breath - two, (3) In-breath, out-breath - three, (4) In-breath, out-breath - four, (5) In-breath, out-breath - five, (6) In-breath, out-breath - six, (7) In-breath, out-breath - seven, (8) In-breath, out-breath - eight, (9) In-breath, out-breath - nine, and (10) In-breath, out-breath - ten.

It is also recommended to count from five to ten, meaning that one should count no less than five and no more than ten. A meditator may count up to eight, in reverence to the Noble Eightfold Path, which is to be cultivated. His mind should not wander to external objects but should remain focused on counting from one to eight, striving for concentration to keep the mind calm. By using the counting method, the meditator can gradually focus on the object of breathing in and out with the power of mindfulness, strengthening his awareness. When he has meditated for half an hour to an hour, he can stop counting and continue to meditate directly on the in-breath and out-breath. He should make a firm resolution: "May my meditating mind remain calm for half an hour or an hour," and then begin meditation. If his meditation is consistently successful in each sitting, he can proceed to the second step - mindfulness of the length of the breath.

5.4.3. The mindfulness of the length of breath

The first important step in *ānāpānassati* meditation is to be constantly mindful of breathing in long and out long by deeply breathing in and out through the nose. If meditators can continuously meditate on breathing in and out for about an hour in each meditation session, the Buddha advised them to proceed to the second step: mindfulness of the length of the breath. When breathing in long, they should know distinctly, "We breathe in long," and when breathing out long, they should know distinctly, "We breathe out long."²³

What is meant by "long" here? It refers to the duration of breathing in and out. If inhalation takes a long time, then let it be long. However, the meditator himself does not intentionally prolong the breath; rather, he breathes naturally. A meditator should always breathe regularly, without forcing or inquiring how long the breath will last. If he attempts to control his breath, it will affect his concentration and lead to distraction. Sometimes, the breath remains long for the entire sitting, but in general, its length changes over time during meditation. Whatever the length of the in-breath and out-breath, they should be of equal

²³ D. II 291.

duration.²⁴ Mindfulness of the length of breath helps develop concentration.

The meditator should not mentally label the breath as “long.” Instead, he should continually concentrate on the breathing process, whether using the counting method or without counting. When the mind remains calmly focused on the breath, he simply acknowledges the breath as “long” while maintaining awareness of breathing in and out. The meditator should strive to keep his mind calmly focused on the breath for one hour, two hours, and so on in each sitting. At this stage, a meditation sign (*nimitta*) may appear. However, whether it appears or not, he should not pay special attention to it but instead proceed to the next step.

5.4.4. Mindfulness of the short of breath

The second important step in *ānāpānassati* meditation is to be constantly aware of breathing in short and out short by observing the superficial breathing in and out at the nose. If the meditator is able to maintain mindfulness of the length of the breath continuously for about half an hour or one hour in each meditation session, it is recommended to proceed to the next step: mindfulness of the short breath, as described below. When breathing in short, he knows distinctly, “I breathe in short,” and when breathing out short, he knows distinctly, “I breathe out short.”²⁵

What is meant by “short” here? It means that the breath is naturally short. If the duration of breathing is short, then let it be short. However, the meditator should not deliberately shorten or control the breath. Instead, he should continue to breathe normally. He should not hold his breath intentionally, nor should he concern himself with how short the breath is.²⁶ Attempting to manipulate the breath will affect his concentration and lead to distraction.

If the inhalation is long and the exhalation is short, the meditator may unconsciously lean back. On the other hand, if the inhalation is short and the exhalation is long, his body may tend to bend forward. Therefore, inhalation and exhalation should be of equal length to maintain balance. Regardless of these tendencies, the meditator should always remain calm and breathe naturally. The meditator should not mentally label the exhalation as “long” or “short.” Instead, he should focus his mind on the breath, whether using the counting method or without counting. When he is focused on the breath and the mind is calm, he will naturally recognize whether the breath is long or short. When the meditator can calmly and mindfully concentrate on both long and short breaths in a composed manner - sustaining this awareness for one hour, two hours, or more in each meditation session - the meditation sign (*nimitta*) may appear at this stage. However, whether it appears or not, the meditator should proceed to the next stage of practice.

²⁴ Mehm Tin Mon (2004): 140.

²⁵ D. II 291.

²⁶ Mehm Tin Mon (2004): 140.

5.4.5. Mindfulness of the whole breath

The third important step in *ānāpānassati* meditation is to be constantly mindful the breathing in whole and out whole by their deep breathing in and out at the nose. If the meditator can observe the short of breath meditation continuously for about half an hour or one hour at every sitting the meditation, it is recommended to continue observing the next step of mindfulness of the in and out experiencing the whole body. He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body,” and “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body”.²⁷ It means beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole in-breath.

First, meditator should focus on the inhale and exhale. Then, he should try to be intensely aware of the length of the breath as long or the short of the breath as short, whether it is long or short. When he can focus on the length of the breath and the short of the breath, he should try to be mindfully aware of the beginning, middle, and end of the breath.

While doing so, one should not try to note this as the beginning, middle, and end. Then, one should not label it as the beginning, middle, or end. Trying to do so can damage one's concentration. If one cannot sit in meditation without labeling, one should simply label it as ingoing breath and outgoing breath.

Meditator should not follow the breath in and out of the body, whether it enters or leaves the body. When he breathes in, one should not note taking the breath that touches the nostrils as in the beginning, the breath that reaches the chest as in the middle, or the breath that reaches the navel as in the end of the whole in-breath. Likewise, when he breathes out, he should not take note the navel, the chest and nostrils as the considered the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole out-breath. He must focus his mind only on the breath that is touching or brushing the tip of the nose, the nostrils or the upper lip, accordingly focusing on his mind at one point, that is, the point of contact. On the other hand, one should observe mindfully the whole in and out-breath from beginning to end by its touch the tip of his nose or his nostrils or his upper lip.

The meditator his self should note like a gate-keeper. Supposing that a gate-keeper does not check people in and out the city because they are not a concern to him. Nonetheless he does examine everyone who arrives at his gate. Similarly, a meditator does not focus on the breath in and out that enters and leaves in the nose, because they are not a concern to him. but he pays attention to the each ingoing breath and out-going breath that reaches at the nostril gate.

He his self should also act like a sawyer. Supposing that a sawyer is cutting a log with a saw. his mindfulness is established at the saw's teeth where they cut the log, without his giving attention to the saw's teeth as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so. In other words, he pays attention only on the teeth of the saw that cut the log; his eyes do not follow the saw as it moves forward and backward. Yet he is aware the teeth of

²⁷ D. II 291.

the saw that cut the log whether the saw is moving forward or backward and whether it moves through a long distance or short distance. Moreover he is also aware the beginning, the middle and the end of the saw-teeth that have cut through the log. Likewise, the meditator without focusing on the in-going breath and out-going breath as they approach and recede, focus his mind on the nose tip or the upper lip. By giving attention to the in-breath and out-breath at the point of contact, he also knows the beginning, the middle, the end of the in-breath and out-breath.²⁸

When the meditator can calmly and mindfully establish his mindfulness on the beginning, the middle, and the end of the in-going breath and the out-going breath for one hour, two hours or more at every sitting meditation, the sign (*nimitta*) of breathing meditation should appear at this stage. Whether it appears or not, the meditator should proceed to the next stage.

5.4.6. Mindfulness of calming the bodily formation breath

The fourth important step in *ānāpānassati* meditation is to be constantly mindful of breathing in while calming the bodily formation and breathing out while calming the bodily formation by observing deep breathing in and out at the nose. If the meditator can continuously observe the beginning, middle, and end of the in-going and out-going breath for one hour, two hours, or more in each meditation session, it is recommended to proceed to the next step: mindfulness of calming the bodily formation during in-breath and out-breath. He trains thus: “I shall breathe in calming the bodily formation,” and “I shall breathe out calming the bodily formation.”²⁹

Thus did the Buddha give this instruction. What is meant by calming the bodily formation here? It means that when one can calmly focus on the beginning, middle, and end of the whole breath, the breathing naturally becomes more and more subtle. As the gross in-going and out-going breath gradually disappears, consciousness with the gentle in-going and out-going breath as its object arises. Even when the coarse in-breath and out-breath cease, gentle breathing continues to manifest.

The meditator should reflect on this process using the simile of a bronze bell. Suppose a person strikes a bronze bell with a heavy iron bar. At first, a loud, rumbling sound arises, and he perceives this harsh sound in his consciousness. After some time, as the loud sound gradually fades, he perceives only a softer sound in his consciousness. This analogy illustrates an important distinction: unlike other meditation subjects that tend to become more vivid as practice deepens, breathing meditation becomes increasingly subtle, making it difficult to recognize progress as one advances.

However, if the breath becomes so subtle that it is no longer apparent, the meditator should not get up from his seat. If he does so and his posture is disturbed, he must restart the meditation anew. If he consciously tries

²⁸ Mehm Tin Mon (2004): 141.

²⁹ D. II 29.

to make his breathing calm and subtle, he may begin to breathe too slowly, causing fatigue and hindering concentration. If he refrains from controlling the breath, it will naturally become smooth, subtle, and calm. Therefore, he should continue his sitting meditation as before, maintaining mindfulness at the point where the in-breath and out-breath are normally felt.

The meditator should also reflect on the simile of the farmer. Suppose a farmer is plowing his field with oxen. After some time, he releases the oxen to graze freely and rest under a shady tree. The oxen soon wander to different places in search of food. After a while, when the oxen have roamed for part of the day, they come down to the usual place where they bathe and drink water.

When the farmer wishes to retrieve them, he does not follow their tracks. Instead, he goes directly to the spot where they typically bathe and drink and waits there. When the oxen emerge from the bathing and drinking place, he catches them and yokes them again. Then he leads them back and continues plowing by prodding them with his goad.

Similarly, the meditator practices mindfulness of breathing for some time with in-breaths and out-breaths. He should not seek them anywhere other than the place where they are normally felt. Using the “rope” of mindfulness and the “goad” of understanding, he should keep his mind fixed at the point where the breath is naturally experienced and continue practicing diligently.

VI. APPLICATION OF BREATHING MEDITATION TO ELIMINATE SORROW

To attain peace of mind or deal with a sorrowful mind, one can apply breathing meditation. When someone systematically practices breathing meditation, they will soon recognize the nature of sorrow, which manifests in many forms and disrupts daily life.

First, one should acknowledge what sorrow is and how it arises. People who do not thoroughly address sorrow cannot fully appreciate the things that bring joy in life. Those who experience deep sorrow may possess wealth, education, and companionship, yet still fail to find peace within themselves. In today’s world, various entertainment platforms – such as the internet, Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, numerous apps, and social media – may provide momentary distraction for a sorrowful person. However, as soon as the entertainment ends, grief returns. Superficial physical remedies are not effective in alleviating sorrow. Instead, overcoming sorrow requires systematic mental training.

A regular 15 – 30 minute breathing meditation every morning is one of the best ways to prevent sorrow. If one fails to manage sorrow as it arises, it can lead to a chain of negative emotions—sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. For example, in the story of Paṭācārā from the *Sahassavagga* of the *Dhammapada*,³⁰ Paṭācārā became mad due to the loss of her entire family. She lost one son to a hawk, another son was swept away by water, her husband was bitten by a

³⁰ *Dhp* 162.

poisonous snake, and her parents and three brothers perished in a violent storm in *Sāvatthi* the previous night. This story illustrates that sorrow caused by the loss of loved ones can severely impact those who have not trained their minds well.

Furthermore, the story of Kisāgotamī conveys the same message: “The boy died when he was just a toddler, and Kisāgotamī was stricken with grief. Carrying the dead body of her son, she went about asking everyone she met for medicine that would restore her son to life.”³¹ Her severe sorrow drove her to madness because she failed to recognize the true nature of grief arising from the loss of her beloved child.

However, if one can control sorrow at the moment it arises, it can lead to a series of positive emotions. The Buddha addressed the Minister Santati, who was grieving over the death of a female dancer, to help him overcome sorrow and understand the true nature of grief. He spoke the following verse: “In the past, there has been clinging (*upādāna*) in you due to craving; let go of it. In the future, do not allow such clinging to arise in you. Do not harbor any clinging in the present. By not having any attachment, craving, or passion, your mind will become calm, and you will realize *Nibbāna*.”³²

Finally, Paṭācārā, Kisāgotamī, and the Minister, who were once devastated by grief, became individuals who could smile and experience true happiness, completely free from sorrow. Therefore, anyone experiencing sorrow in the present should look directly at it as it truly is and acknowledge it. In addition to the methods explained above, there is another technique one can apply while eating, driving, reading, or even sitting in a meeting. It is easy to experience sorrow throughout the day, whether due to economic hardships, social difficulties, or crises such as war. Whenever one encounters an unavoidable state of sorrow in daily life, it is essential to practice breathing meditation for at least 15 to 30 minutes every day. This practice helps one overcome sorrow and cultivates inner peace.

VII. CONCLUSION

Breathing meditation encompasses various methods for eliminating mental afflictions such as sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. However, this paper focuses on one method: *Ānāpānassati*. It recommends understanding the nature of a sorrowful mind to prevent and eliminate sorrow. Although different terms are used to define suffering, according to Buddhist teachings, all forms of suffering fall under the category of *dukkha*. A fundamental Buddhist doctrine, the Four Noble Truths, emphasizes the daily application of breathing meditation to overcome mental suffering, including sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. We must clearly understand that sorrow is suffering (*dukkha*). We should recognize and eliminate the cause of sorrow (*dukkha-samudaya*). The cessation of sorrow is possible through the practice of *Ānāpānassati*, which leads to the removal of suffering (*dukkha-*

³¹ *Ibid.* 164.

³² *Ibid.* 202.

nirodha). The path leading to the cessation of sorrow through *Ānāpānassati* meditation is the only way to overcome sorrow (*dukkha-nirodha-magga*).³³

Developing and cultivating mindfulness of breathing perfects the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. Developing and cultivating the four kinds of mindfulness meditation accomplishes the seven factors of awakening. Furthermore, developing and cultivating the seven factors of awakening perfects knowledge and liberation.³⁴ “Just as the mist that rises at the end of the summer months can be instantly dispelled by a heavy rain, so too, monks, when mindfulness of breathing in and out is developed and practiced frequently, it becomes peaceful, pure, and noble. It needs no addition and is a place of tranquility. All unwholesome states that have arisen and all unwholesome states yet to arise can be immediately removed.”³⁵ Furthermore, the daily application of breathing meditation, as mentioned in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, can help reduce and overcome recurrent sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair.³⁶ Thus, the Buddhist practice of *Ānāpānassati* meditation serves as a means to prevent sorrow in its various forms and to cultivate a calm and peaceful mind in daily life.

Abbreviations

A	<i>Āṅguttara-nikāya Pāli</i>
D	<i>Dīgha-nikāya Pāli</i>
Dhp.	<i>Dhammapada Pāli</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā Pāli</i>
Ibid.	<i>Ibidem/the same source just cited above</i>
K.	<i>Khuddaka-nikāya Pāli</i>
M.	<i>Majjhima-nikāya Pāli</i>
Paṭis	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>
S	<i>Saṃyutta-nikāya Pāli</i>
Vibh	<i>Vibhaṅga Pāli</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhi-magga</i>

³³ D. II 305-6; M. III 250; S. V 422.

³⁴ M. III 82.

³⁵ S. V 322.

³⁶ D. II 290.

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THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM ON COPING WITH DISSATISFACTION (*DUKKHA*) IN PALLIATIVE CARE OF TERMINAL ILLNESS

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Abstract:

This research explores the relevance of Theravāda Buddhist teachings to palliative care, particularly in addressing dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) among terminally ill patients. *Dukkha*, a central concept in Buddhism, manifests as mental suffering, including anxiety, fear of death, and depression, which are prevalent in terminal illnesses. Theravāda Buddhism offers key strategies for coping with *dukkha*, including support from *kalyānamitta* (good friends), suitable *Dhamma* teachings, and Buddhist practices such as meditation. These teachings emphasize cultivating mindfulness, wisdom, and detachment from worldly attachments, which can help individuals develop a sense of acceptance and peace even in the face of terminal illness. The integration of these Theravāda teachings into palliative care practices has the potential to enhance the holistic care of terminally ill patients by addressing their emotional and spiritual needs. This study aims to identify specific Theravāda teachings that can serve as effective coping strategies and explore their practical applications in palliative care. By bridging the gap in current research, this study contributes to a more comprehensive approach to palliative care, fostering a more compassionate and inclusive environment for those facing terminal illnesses.

Keywords: *Theravāda Buddhism, palliative care, dukkha, terminal illness, kalyānamitta.*

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INTRODUCTION

Terminal illness often leads to profound mental suffering, including anxiety, fear of death, and depression – collectively known as dissatisfaction. Palliative care aims to alleviate this dissatisfaction through a holistic approach that addresses not only physical symptoms but also emotional and spiritual needs. The Theravāda teachings offer a comprehensive understanding of the nature of suffering and its cessation¹, making them particularly relevant to palliative care for terminal illness. However, there exists a significant gap in current research regarding this perspective.

Research Question and Objectives: Existing literature primarily focuses on compassion, mindfulness, and acceptance but often overlooks the profound dissatisfaction experienced by terminally ill individuals.² Additionally, it frequently neglects the potential role of *kalyānamitta* (good friend) in providing essential spiritual care. This gap in current research prompted the research question: “What specific Theravāda teachings can gradually serve as effective coping strategies to alleviate dissatisfaction among terminally ill patients and their families in the context of palliative care?”

This study identifies a critical need for coping strategies that address dissatisfaction in terminally ill patients – an area often overlooked in current palliative care practices. Furthermore, this paper aims to identify specific Theravāda teachings that can serve as effective coping strategies to alleviate dissatisfaction among terminally ill patients and their families.

The hypothesis suggests that incorporating Theravāda Buddhist principles – such as support from *kalyānamitta*, *suitable* Dhamma teachings, Buddhist practices, and mental development through meditation will effectively alleviate dissatisfaction among terminally ill patients. A qualitative research study utilizing documentary analysis of the *Tipitaka Pāli* and relevant scholarly works will be employed to explore the *Theravāda* perspective on coping with dissatisfaction in terminal illness.

I. TERMINAL ILLNESS AND PALLIATIVE CARE

A terminal illness is an incurable condition that typically leads to death within a short period, often within six months.³ Examples include advanced cancer, organ failure (such as heart, lung, or kidney failure), and late-stage

¹ *Alagaddūpamasutta*, MN. 22: “Pubbe cāham bhikkhave, etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi, dukkhassa ca nirodham” Bhikkhu Sujato, *Middle Discourses: A lucid translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, accessed on January 28, 2025, available at: <https://suttacentral.net/mn22/en/sujato>.

² Ashin Sumanacara PhD, *Meaningful Life, Fearless Death*. Canada: Subhashita Books. 2022, p. 114-116; and, Eva K. Masel, Sophie Schur, and Herbert H. Watzke, “Life is Uncertain, Death is Certain, Buddhism and Palliative Care,” *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* Vol. 44. Issue 2 (2012), p. 307-312, accessed on January 28, 2025, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2012.02.018>.

³ *Sege’s Medical Dictionary* (2011), *Terminal illness*, accessed on January 28, 2025, available at: <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/terminal+illness>.

AIDS, which exposes individuals to life-threatening infections. Unlike serious or chronic illnesses, terminal conditions are irreversible, and curative treatments are no longer effective. Understanding these distinctions is vital for making care decisions and improving quality of life when curative treatments are no longer viable.⁴

Palliative care is a medical approach focused on improving the quality of life for patients with serious or terminal illnesses by managing symptoms, relieving pain, and addressing emotional, social, and spiritual needs. According to the World Health Organization⁵, palliative care enhances quality of life by preventing and relieving suffering through early identification and treatment of pain, as well as addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual issues. An interdisciplinary team provides comprehensive care tailored to the patient's needs, helping manage symptoms such as pain, fatigue, and anxiety while focusing on emotional and spiritual well-being.

1.1. Emotional and spiritual challenges in terminal illness

Terminal illnesses bring significant emotional and spiritual challenges for both patients and their families. Individuals often experience a mix of emotions such as anxiety, fear, and depression, arising not only from physical decline but also from the awareness of impending death, loss of independence, and uncertainty about the future. According to Buddhist scholar Dr. Padmasiri De Silva, emotions arise from how individuals perceive their situation, reacting with attraction to positive experiences and repulsion to negative ones.⁶ Patients and their families may struggle with anxiety, loneliness, anger, and depression, often linked to grief and feelings of being a burden.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross⁷ introduced the five stages of grief (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance), which describe how individuals cope with terminal illness and loss. Spiritual distress can manifest in various forms, including feelings of hopelessness, a loss of meaning, or anger toward a higher power. For some individuals, these challenges may be alleviated through religious practices such as prayer or rituals. When effectively addressed, spiritual care can provide patients with a sense of peace and acceptance during their final stages of life. In palliative care, addressing the emotional and spiritual challenges of terminal illness requires a holistic approach that incorporates spiritual perspectives, highlighting the relevance of Theravāda Buddhism.

⁴ Wikipedia contributors (January 26, 2025), *Terminal illness*, accessed on January 28, 2025, available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Terminal_illness&oldid=1271901322.

⁵ WHO (August 5, 2020), *Palliative Care*, accessed on January 28, 2025, available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/palliative-care>.

⁶ Padmasiri De Silva, *The psychology of emotions in Buddhist perspective*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (1976), p. 45.

⁷ E. Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*. London: Routledge (1969), p. 9.

2.2. The relevance of Buddhism to palliative care

2.2.1. Spiritual care in palliative care

The World Health Organization emphasizes the importance of spiritual care in palliative care, recognizing its role in helping patients achieve peace through personal goals or religious beliefs. At the end of life, many individuals seek peace of mind, comfort, and spiritual understanding. Religious beliefs, including Buddhism, provide comfort and guidance during terminal illness, as studies⁸ have shown that engaging in Buddhist practices enhances spiritual well-being.

2.2.2. Buddhist teachings on holistic care

The Buddha's teachings highlight the importance of holistic care, emphasizing the role of ideal caregivers and the wisdom offered by a *kalyāṇamitta* (good friend) through suitable *Dhamma* teachings. These teachings address dissatisfaction in terminally ill patients by promoting compassion and spiritual guidance. For example, the Buddha personally cared for a sick monk, illustrating the significance of compassion in supporting the terminally ill. He also provided spiritual guidance to gravely ill individuals like Ven. Vakkali, encouraging reflection on the impermanence of the body and detachment from worldly attachments, and Ven. Assaji emphasizes the impermanence of feelings and the need for detachment from pain and pleasure.⁹

2.2.3. Buddhist practices for terminal illness

Lay followers also received similar guidance from the Buddha. For instance, he inspired Matthakunnali to develop faith and encouraged Dīghāvu, a gravely ill follower, to establish faith in the Triple Gem (the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha) and engage in meditation. Likewise, Ven. Sāriputta counseled the wealthy householder Anāthapindika, advocating for the practice of non-attachment. The *Gilāna Sutta* provides practical consolations for supporting the terminally ill, addressing both their spiritual and emotional concerns.¹⁰ These examples demonstrate the relevance of *Theravāda* Buddhism to palliative care, particularly in the context of terminal illness.

2.3. The doctrine of suffering in *Theravāda* Buddhism

2.3.1. Understanding *dukkha* from a *Theravāda* perspective

Dukkha, or suffering, is a central concept in *Theravāda* teachings. The Buddha emphasized, "In the past, as today, what I describe is suffering and

⁸ Rungkanit Thongpool, and S. Mahatthanadull, "Buddhist Approach to Improve the Quality of Life of Palliative Patients," in *Journal of International Buddhist Studies* vol. 12, no. 2 (Dec. 2021), 53-63, accessed on January 29, 2025, available at: <https://so09.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jibs/article/view/2573>.

⁹ Bhikkhu Brahmalī, *Theravāda Collection on Monastic Law*, accessed on January 30, 2025, available at: <https://suttacentral.net/pli-tv-kd8/en/brahmalī; Vakkalisutta, SN 22.87; Assajisutta SN 22.88>

¹⁰ SN 55.3; MN 143; SN 55.54.

the cessation of suffering¹¹,” introducing this teaching through the four Noble Truths. These truths – (1) the truth of suffering (*dukkhasacca*), (2) the origin of suffering (*samudaya*), (3) the cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodha*), and (4) the path leading to this cessation (*magga*) – form the foundation of his doctrine. The path involves the right view, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

While some may interpret these teachings as pessimistic, Buddhism offers a realistic view of life, acknowledging both joy and difficulties. This perspective reflects the Buddha’s Middle Way, recognizing that life is neither entirely miserable nor entirely joyful. The Buddha noted that humans naturally seek pleasure while avoiding pain¹², and his own experiences as a prince and ascetic illustrated the extremes of pleasure and pain.

The Buddha categorized suffering into three primary types: intrinsic suffering (*dukkha-dukkhatā*), which includes painful bodily and mental feelings; suffering due to formations (*sankhāra-dukkhatā*), encompassing all conditioned phenomena; and suffering due to change (*viparināma-dukkhatā*), which arises when pleasant feelings end.¹³ These types of suffering occur within the cycle of life – birth, aging, and death – and are central to understanding the human condition.

2.3.2. The cycle of life: birth, aging, and death

The first Noble Truth, known as the Truth of Suffering, manifests through various life experiences, including birth, aging, and death. These stages of life are often accompanied by forms of suffering such as sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. This suffering arises from associations with the disliked, separation from the liked, and not getting what one wishes for. Briefly, these sufferings arise from clinging to the five aggregates, and the aggregates of clinging themselves are also a source of suffering. As long as clinging remains, one thing is certain to follow: that is birth.

Birth (*jāti*) and the cycle of repeated rebirths are regarded as forms of suffering. Birth is the process of beings entering various forms of existence, the manifestation of the aggregates, and the development of the sense faculties. Birth is considered suffering because it forms the basis for various types of suffering, such as intrinsic suffering, sorrow, etc.¹⁴ As soon as a person is born, the process of aging begins.

In response to King Pasenadi’s question about escaping aging and death, the Buddha explains that no one – regardless of wealth, status, or spiritual achievement – can avoid these natural processes. Even the Buddha himself, despite being fully enlightened, experiences the effects of aging, with wrinkled

¹¹ MN. 22.

¹² MN 46.

¹³ SN 38.14.

¹⁴ Dhṛp 36; DN 22.

skin and weakened faculties.¹⁵ Indeed, in certain contexts, enlightenment is not an antidote for aging.

Aging (*jara*) refers to the gradual physical decline experienced by human beings. It includes the breaking of teeth, greying of hair, wrinkling of skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings. The Buddha highlights the importance of understanding the nature of aging and death, including their origins and cessation. Without this understanding, ascetics or brahmins cannot be regarded as true spiritual practitioners, as they fail to attain the true purpose of a holy life.¹⁶ He compares the fleeting nature of life to a dream or a droplet of water slipping off a lotus leaf, urging people not to cling to temporary things.¹⁷ Aging stops only when death comes.

Death (*marana*) is defined as the cessation of a person's psycho-physical existence, marked by the three vital elements: vitality (*āyu*), heat (*usmā*), and consciousness (*viññāna*) being discarded.¹⁸ It signifies the breaking up of the body's aggregates, laying to rest of the corpse and cutting off of the life faculty of the beings.¹⁹

The four causes of death include the natural end of one's lifespan, the expiration of the productive *kamma* force that sustains life, the simultaneous expiration of both, and the impact of destructive *kamma*.²⁰ At the time of death, one of three types of visions may appear in the dying person's mind: *Kamma* (the force of *kamma* that produces the next rebirth), a *Sign of Kamma* (a past action or symbol connected to that action), or a *Sign of Destiny* (a symbol representing the realm or state of next rebirth).

The narrative of Arahāt Sona further illustrates the importance of mental process during near-death moments.²¹ His father experienced bad visions due to bad deeds, but through Sona's guidance, his father's mind was redirected to wholesome thoughts, changing his future rebirth. As death may come at any time and there is no bargaining with its inevitability,²² a wise person remains alert, using their lifetime to focus on spiritual work: understanding dissatisfaction and abandoning clinging.

2.3.3. The spectrum of dissatisfaction and clinging

Dissatisfaction and suffering manifest in various forms, including sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair, association with the disliked, separation

¹⁵ SN 3.3; SN 48.41.

¹⁶ DN 22; SN 12.71.

¹⁷ Snp 4.6.

¹⁸ MN 43.

¹⁹ DN 22.

²⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (1999), p. 219 - 220.

²¹ Ashin Janakabhivamsa, *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*, trans. U Ko Lay. Yangon: ITBMU (1999), p. 234 - 235.

²² MN 131.

from the liked, and not getting what one wishes for. Sorrow (*soka*) is the intense mental pain felt after a loss, often compared to a burning sensation that deeply affects an individual's well-being. Lamentation (*parideva*) is the outward expression of sorrow, which can amplify suffering by adding physical symptoms like a dry throat, lips, and palate.²³

Pain (*dukkha*) refers to physical discomfort, described as physical pain, physical unpleasantness, or the painful feeling born from physical contact. Grief (*domanassa*) is mental suffering characterized by the oppression of the mind, often leading to behaviors like weeping or self-harm. Despair (*upāyāsa*) is the extreme mental suffering that arises from loss, manifesting as dejection and hopelessness. The *Visuddhimagga* explains that while sorrow is like a slow-burning fire, despair is what remains after it has boiled over, intensifying suffering until it dries up completely.²⁴

Association with the disliked (*appiyehi sampayoga*) and separation from the liked (*piyehi vippayoga*) are forms of suffering that arise from contact with unpleasant things or people and being parted from sources of joy, respectively. Not getting what one wishes for (*yampiccham na labhati*) occurs when desires for things like freedom from aging or illness are unattainable, leading to disappointment.

In Buddhist philosophy, all suffering arises from clinging to the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*): physical form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. When these aggregates are influenced by cankers (*sāsava*) and subject to clinging (*upādāniya*), they are referred to as the five aggregates that are objects of clinging (*pañca-upādānakkhandhā*). Clinging to these aggregates leads to suffering because they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self.²⁵

The first Noble Truth describes the universal experience of human sufferings, both mental and physical, which must be understood clearly (*pariññeyya*) to address these issues effectively in palliative care. Recognizing the factors contributing to dissatisfaction is crucial for providing effective care.

2.3.4. Factors contributing to dissatisfaction

Dissatisfaction arises in various forms, including sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, all of which stem from attachment to what one holds dear (*piya*).²⁶ These forms of dissatisfaction are interconnected and often arise when dear ones decay or perish. Sensual pleasures, being impermanent, also lead to dissatisfaction when they fade or change. The Buddha teaches that only by relinquishing attachment to desires for sense pleasures can suffering be prevented. For example, he illustrates this with the analogy of a man in love

²³ DN 22.

²⁴ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (2010), p. 516.

²⁵ SN 22.48.

²⁶ MN 7.

with a woman: if he sees her laughing with another man, his attachment causes him immense pain, but if he lets go of his desire, he no longer suffers.²⁷

Desire is identified as the root of dissatisfaction. In a discourse with the chief Bhadraka²⁸, the Buddha explained that all suffering, present and future, originates from desire. Additionally, remorse (*kukkucca*) and regret (*vip̐patisāra*) contribute to dissatisfaction, particularly in terminally ill individuals. For instance, Venerable Vakkali²⁹ experienced deep regret during his near-death moments for not having visited the Buddha.

The *Anāthapindika Sutta*³⁰ highlights four anxieties faced by those nearing death, arising from a lack of faith in the Triple Gem and unwholesome conduct. These anxieties reflect the spiritual and ethical roots of dissatisfaction. The *Salla Sutta*³¹ compares physical and mental pain to two darts, noting that while physical pain is inevitable, mental suffering – arising from emotional reactions such as aversion – intensifies dissatisfaction.

Lacking wisdom or being covered in ignorance, coupled with attachment and clinging to impermanent phenomena, becomes a fundamental cause of dissatisfaction. A wise person, understanding the impermanence of life, dispels grief as swiftly as the wind blows away a tuft of cotton.³² Recognizing that dissatisfaction arises from desires, attachments, and ignorance, a wise person should overcome these by cultivating wisdom and detachment.

III. THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM ON COPING WITH DISSATISFACTION

3.1. *Theravāda* strategies for coping with dissatisfaction

Theravāda Buddhism offers several strategies for coping with dissatisfaction in palliative care situations, emphasizing the importance of support from *kalyāṇamitta*, listening to suitable *Dhamma* teachings that address specific needs (the causes of dissatisfaction), Buddhist practices or rituals that bring emotional comfort for mental well-being, and mental development through tranquility and insight meditation. These strategies lead to cultivating mindfulness and wisdom, enabling individuals to develop a sense of acceptance and peace, even in the face of terminal illness, by recognizing the impermanence of all phenomena.

3.2. The dual role of *Kalyāṇamitta* in palliative care

In *Theravāda* Buddhism, the concept of *kalyāṇamitta*³³ (good friend) holds profound significance in fostering both secular well-being and spiritual growth. A *kalyāṇamitta* serves a dual role by offering emotional support and

²⁷ MN 101.

²⁸ SN 42.11.

²⁹ SN 22.87.

³⁰ SN 55.27.

³¹ SN 36.6: “So dve vedanā vedayati – kāyikañca, cetasikañca.”

³² Snp 3.8: “Paṇḍito kusalo naro, khippamuppatitaṃ sokaṃ, vāto tūlaṃiva dham̐saye.”

³³ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Pali Text Society (2009), p. 225.

practical guidance to address worldly concerns, as well as providing spiritual mentorship to encourage moral and spiritual growth. This dual function is especially vital for individuals facing terminal illness, as it helps them navigate emotional and spiritual challenges with resilience and peace.

The *Palhamamitta Sutta* and *Singāla Sutta* highlight the key qualities of an ideal friend, such as generosity, endurance, loyalty, and trustworthiness.³⁴ In palliative care, these qualities of supportive companionship are crucial for fostering a sense of security and joy. The *Dutiyaṃitta Sutta* and *Dīghajāṇu Sutta* outline attributes that support spiritual growth, including faith, virtue, generosity, and wisdom.³⁵ Maintaining relationships with individuals who embody these qualities promotes moral and spiritual progress through dialogue and engagement.

A *kalyāṇamitta* often serves as a teacher or mentor, providing guidance and compassionate instruction. The *Visuddhimagga*³⁶ elaborates on this role, describing *kalyāṇamitta* as a giver of meditation subjects that support practitioners in developing concentration and insight knowledge through meditation. In palliative care, acting as spiritual mentors, *kalyāṇamitta* assists patients in confronting dissatisfaction by offering suitable Dhamma guidance.

3.2.1. The importance of suitable *dhamma* teachings

Suitable Dhamma teachings focus on an appropriate topic, time, place, and method for delivering teachings. The *Dhamma* speaker should consider the causes of dissatisfaction, the patient's spiritual background, and cultural context. The *Paññāvuḍḍhi Sutta* underscores that listening to suitable *Dhamma* teachings fosters the development of wisdom.³⁷ The speaker aims to deliver teachings that uplift the mind, enhance faith and wisdom, and alleviate dissatisfaction, which is often rooted in attachment and ignorance.

The *Gilāna Sutta*³⁸ provides essential guidance for comforting individuals suffering from terminal illness. The Buddha outlines four consolations to ease their suffering:

- (1) Faith in the Triple Gem and Morality: Reassuring the patient about their faith in the Triple Gems and the purification of their moral conduct fosters peace of mind.
- (2) Letting Go of Attachments: Addressing concerns about loved ones, the Buddha advises patients to relinquish attachment and focus on spiritual well-being.
- (3) Turning Away from Worldly Pleasures: Guiding patients to detach from human sensual enjoyments by shifting aspirations toward heavenly rebirths.
- (4) Insight into Impermanence: Emphasizing the impermanence of even *deva* and

³⁴ AN 7.36; DN 31

³⁵ AN 7.37; AN 8.54

³⁶ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (2010), p. 93.

³⁷ AN 4.248.

³⁸ SN 55.54.

Brahmā realms and directing them toward ending self-identity views.

Suitable *dhamma* teachings play a vital role in addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of terminally ill patients. By fostering wisdom and faith, they provide a foundation for Buddhist practices that promote mental well-being.

3.2.2. Buddhist practices for mental well-being

Theravāda Buddhist practices such as generosity, taking refuge, observing precepts, listening to Dhamma, and forgiveness provide emotional and spiritual support, especially in the context of palliative care for terminally ill patients. Acts of generosity, such as offering food or robes to monastics, generate meritorious deeds, fostering a sense of meaning and fulfillment while bringing happiness to both patients and their families.

Rituals also play a key role in comforting terminally ill patients. Taking refuge in the Triple Gem and observing the five precepts provide a spiritual foundation. Listening to protective chants, such as the *Bojjhangā Sutta* recited by monks, creates a calming and sacred atmosphere for patients and caregivers alike.³⁹ Asking for and granting forgiveness resolves remaining grudges or feelings of animosity, promoting peace and happiness. Patients and their families can recite statements like: “If I have done wrong to anyone by deed, speech, or thought, may I be forgiven so that I may live in peace and happiness. I also forgive anyone who may have wronged me by deed, speech, or thought, and I sincerely forgive myself so that we may all live in peace and happiness.”

3.3. Calming the mind with tranquility meditation (*Samatha bhāvanā*)

Samatha (tranquility meditation) can be incorporated into palliative care as an effective approach for managing dissatisfaction in terminally ill patients. This form of meditation offers various subjects for mental development, including *kasinā*, foulness, recollections, divine abidings, immaterial states, and perception of repulsiveness in nutriment.⁴⁰ For patients facing fear and anxiety, recalling the qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the *Sangha* can provide mental strength and a sense of safety.⁴¹

For those facing terminal illness, *samatha* meditation offers a way to calm the mind and temporarily suppress mental hindrances. However, since the underlying defilements (*anusayākilesa*) may resurface when concentration weakens, practitioners should practice *vipassanā* to uproot these defilements, effectively overcoming dissatisfaction.

3.4. Overcoming dissatisfaction by insight meditation (*Vipassanā bhāvanā*)

Vipassanā (insight meditation) is a path to the purification of beings, overcoming sorrow and lamentation, and realizing *nibbāna*.⁴² The practice

³⁹ Chanmyay Myaing Sayadaw, *The Bojjhangas: The Medicine that Makes All Diseases Disappear*. Malaysia: Nyanasiri (2008), p. 7.

⁴⁰ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (2010), p. 104-105.

⁴¹ SN 11.3; DN 32

⁴² DN 22.

of *vipassanā* involves the four Foundations of Mindfulness, which require observing the body, feelings, minds, and mental objects with mindfulness and clear comprehension, free from worldly desires and grief. By making mental notes to each phenomenon as it arises, the practitioner develops momentary concentration.⁴³ Through *vipassanā*, practitioners develop insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāṇa*) that gradually dispels wrong views and attachments. As wrong views and attachments diminish, dissatisfaction is also reduced.

The Theravāda teachings demonstrate a correlation between *vipassanā* practice and the reduction of dissatisfaction. The practice of the four Foundations of Mindfulness, particularly in palliative care, can provide a therapeutic approach for alleviating dissatisfaction, such as anxiety, anger, or fear.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper explored the application of Theravāda Buddhist teachings in addressing dissatisfaction among terminally ill patients in palliative care. It highlighted the importance of understanding *dukkha* from a Theravāda perspective, emphasizing its relevance to coping with terminal illness. The study identified specific Theravāda teachings that can serve as effective coping strategies, including the role of *kalyāṇamitta*, suitable Dhamma teachings, Buddhist practices, tranquility, and insight meditation.

The research underscored the significance of integrating Theravāda Buddhist principles into palliative care, focusing on emotional and spiritual support. It emphasized that incorporating support from *kalyāṇamitta*, suitable Dhamma teachings, Buddhist practices, and mental development through meditation can effectively alleviate dissatisfaction among terminally ill patients.

Future research should explore the practical implementation of Theravāda Buddhist teachings in palliative care settings. This could involve developing structured programs that integrate Buddhist practices into existing palliative care frameworks. Collaboration between Buddhist communities and healthcare providers is crucial for creating effective spiritual support systems that address the holistic needs of terminally ill patients.

Encouraging further studies on the impact of Buddhist practices on mental well-being in palliative care could provide valuable insights into improving patient outcomes. Additionally, exploring how different cultural contexts influence the adoption and effectiveness of these practices can help tailor interventions to diverse populations.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive approach to palliative care, one that integrates spiritual well-being with physical and emotional care, fostering a more holistic and compassionate environment for those facing terminal illnesses.

⁴³ Chanmyay Sayadaw, *Vipassana Meditation*, accessed on January 29, 2025, available at: <http://www.myanmarnet.net/nibbana/chanmy2d.htm>.

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INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE AS DEPICTED IN MAHĀYĀNA-ŚRADDHOTPĀDA ŚĀSTRA

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Abstract:

Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra (*The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* 大乘起信论) is a treatise to discourse the fundamental faith of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and its methods of practical theory. Its purpose is to let people believe in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and follow its teachings to practice, destroy ignorance (*Avidyā* 无明), recognize the mind which we originally have as suchness (*Tathatā* 真如), and enlighten self and others for self-purification and world peace. How do we utilize its principle to purify our mind, attain inner peace and awareness, and benefit others for world peace and happiness? This research will engage in a detailed study and give a reasonable answer to contribute to Buddhist values in modern society.

Keywords: Ignorance and suchness; non-thoughts; tranquility and insight; pure land method of *amitābha*; equality; mercy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, I engaged in a study about *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. The main theme of this international conference of the United Nations Day of Vesak is about Buddhist peaceful thought, which relates to my research. Thus, I attempt to find the practical methods of *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* to realize personal peace for world peace and harmony. This is the reason why I chose this topic to study.

This study consists of four parts: first, is the fundamental purpose of *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*; second, is the significance of two aspects of one mind; third, is the practical methods of attaining inner peace as depicted in *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*; finally, it deals with the way of promoting world peace through inner peace. It is possible to respond to the main theme of the United Nations Day of Vesak, world peace and happiness as described

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in Buddhist texts, to discover more Buddhist values to contribute to human society.

II. THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF MAHĀYĀNA-ŚRADDHOTPĀDA ŚĀSTRA

The fundamental purpose of *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra* is to eradicate ignorance, realize the truth, and restore the original purity and peace in one's mind. This is also the intent of this treatise. The minds of sentient beings are originally pure. Still, they are confused and muddled due to moments of deluded agitation caused by ignorance, giving rise to all kinds of contaminated and uncontaminated *Dharmas* in mundane and supra-mundane worlds. Suppose one could have faith in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, follow its doctrines in practice, purify one's actions of body, speech, and mind, eliminate evil, cultivate good deeds, abandon desires, and give up evil attachments. In that case, one will completely eradicate ignorance and its derivative defilements from one's mind, purify one's mind, and realize the original nature of suchness for inner peace and world peace as one's practice reaches perfection.

As stated in the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

The triple world, therefore, is unreal and is of the mind only. Apart from it, there are no objects of the five senses and of the mind. What does this mean? Since all things are, without exception, developed from the mind and produced under the condition of deluded thoughts, all differentiations are no other than the differentiations of one's mind itself. Yet the mind cannot perceive the mind itself; the mind has no marks of its own that can be ascertained as a substantial entity as such. It should be understood that the conception of the entire world of objects can be held only based on man's deluded mind of ignorance. All things, therefore, are just like the images in a mirror, which are devoid of any objectivity that one can get hold of; they are of the mind only and are unreal. When the deluded mind comes into being, then various conceptions (*Dharmas*) come to be; and when the deluded mind ceases to be, then these various conceptions cease to be (是故三界虛偽唯心所作。离心則无六尘境界。此义云何？以一切法皆从心起妄念而生，一切分別即分別自心，心不見心无相可得。当知世间一切境界，皆依众生无明妄心而得住持。是故一切法，如镜中像无体可得，唯心虚妄。以心生则种种法生。心灭则种种法灭故。)¹

It is known that all the phenomena appear from one's mind; one practices the noble path to train one's mind to be pure and peaceful. When one's mind is pure, the actions of one's body and speech naturally become pure, and one's world will be peaceful. If one's mind is impure, one's mind will raise delusive thoughts

¹ *The Awakening of Faith*, Āśvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda (in English from the Chinese version of *Paramārtha*), Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 28.

incessantly, leading one to make actions of body and speech, and consequently one's world will be restless and agitated. Therefore, it is said that "When the deluded mind comes into being, then various conceptions (*Dharmas*) come to be; and when the deluded mind ceases to be, then these various conceptions cease to be."²

If one does not realize this truth, one will act randomly, driven by ignorance to do wholesome and unwholesome deeds, with neither awareness nor fearlessness. As a result, one will be reborn and die in the *Samṣāra* without transcending this process. It is noteworthy that ignorance is the fundamental cause of human beings in the cycle of *Samṣāra*. If one wants to get rid of ignorance and return to one's true mind as suchness, one needs to learn the awakening dharma, believe it, and follow it to practice the noble path for accumulating the resources of merit and wisdom. As one's time and conditions are perfect, one can eliminate ignorance, realize the truth, and restore one's pure mind and peace. By contrast, if one does not believe and practice the Buddha's teachings, it is difficult to maintain one's human life. Then, how does one study and practice the noble doctrines to eradicate one's ignorance and realize the truth? There is no way to achieve it. As a consequence, if one wants to keep one's mind peaceful and pure, one should follow the Buddha's instructions to study and practice, destroy evil karma, and cultivate good qualities, making it possible to maintain this human life as a condition to practice. When one's resources of merit and wisdom are perfect through a constant accumulation, one can purify one's mind and attain inner peace and world peace. This is the fundamental purpose of the treatise.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TWO ASPECTS OF ONE MIND

The significance of practicing the Bodhisattva path is to eradicate ignorance and realize the mind as suchness. Suchness and ignorance are respectively included in the "gateway of the mind as suchness (心真如门)" and the "gateway of the mind as phenomena (birth and death) (心生灭门)" in *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. They are revealed from the "One Mind (一心)", which is the "Mind of Sentient Beings (众生心)" - the inherent true mind, also known as the "True Suchness (真如)" or "*Tathāgatagarbha* (the Womb of the *Tathāgata* 如来藏)". Because sentient beings have distracting thoughts and defilements in their minds, in such a way that it covers the true suchness, not making it possible to appear, it is called "*Tathāgatagarbha*". This mind is inherently possessed by both sentient beings and *Buddhas*, encompassing all mundane and supra-mundane phenomena, both contaminated and uncontaminated. It can rise to become a saint or fall to become an ordinary person. A single moment of delusion renders a sentient being, while a single moment of awareness reveals the Buddha. Therefore, *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra* described that:

The principle is "the Mind of the sentient beings". This mind includes in itself all states of being of the phenomenal world and the transcendental

² *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 28.

world. Based on this mind, the meanings of the *Mahāyāna* may be unfolded. Why? Because the absolute aspect of this Mind represents the essence (*svabhāva*) of the *Mahāyāna*, and the phenomenal aspect of this Mind indicates the essence, attributes (*lakṣaṇa*), and influences (*kriyā*) of the *Mahāyāna* itself. The principle of One Mind has two aspects. One is the aspect of Mind in terms of the absolute (*tathatā*: suchness), and the other is the aspect of Mind in terms of phenomena (*saṃsāra*: birth and death) (众生心，是心则摄一切世间法、出世间法。依于此心显示摩诃衍义。何以故？是心真如相，即示摩诃衍体故；是心生灭因缘相，能示摩诃衍自体相用故。……依一心法，有二种门。云何为二？一者、心真如门，二者、心生灭门。)³

One Mind takes the absolute mind (suchness) as its essence and the mind of birth and death as its essence, attributes, and influences due to a single moment of deluded movement, to distinguish the various phenomena, which is named ignorance (*Avidyā*). Ignorance has no inherent essence; its essence is the true mind. This mind (suchness) is originally pure, with neither an increase in ordinary people nor a decrease in saints, and its nature is always unchanging. The Two Gateways revealed by the One Mind embody the two aspects of the mind's unchanging nature and adaptability. What does not change is its pure essence of the mind as suchness, and what adapts to the conditions manifest as the differentiated *Dharmas* caused by a deluded mind.

IV. THE GATEWAY OF THE MIND AS SUCHNESS

Suchness is originally pure and exists in the minds of all living beings. The fundamental significance of practice is to help them return to their original minds. Therefore, practice is a process of gradually eliminating ignorance and purifying the mind, so that the mind as suchness can manifest. By practicing the noble path, one can remove various delusions and defilements, reduce desires and anger, maintain a clear mind, and return to the essential nature of suchness for inner purification and world peace.

According to the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

The mind in terms of the absolute is the one world of reality (*dharmadhātu*) and the essence of all phases of existence in their totality. That which is called "the essential nature of the mind" is unborn and is imperishable. It is only through illusions that all things come to be differentiated. If one is free from illusions, then, to him there will be no appearances (*lakṣaṇa*) of objects regarded as absolutely independent existences; therefore, all things from the beginning transcend all forms of verbalization, description, and conceptualization and are, in the final analysis, undifferentiated, free from alteration, and indestructible. They are only of the One Mind; hence the name suchness (心真如者，即

³ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 7 - 11.

是一法界大总相法门体。所谓心性不生不灭，一切诸法唯依妄念而有差别，若离妄念则无一切境界之相。是故一切法从本以来，离言说相、离名字相、离心缘相，毕竟平等、无有变异、不可破坏。唯是一心故名真如。)⁴

The absolute mind as suchness is the foundation of all phenomena; it is originally pure, neither arises nor ceases, and without distinction. Differences in phenomena arise due to the mind's delusions and discriminations. If one can practice the noble path, it is possible to gradually reduce delusive thoughts and defilements, dissolve karmic obstacles, and return to the pure mind as suchness. Although all phenomena arise dependently and have illusory appearances, they have no self. It is through deluded discrimination that differences arise. When one is free from deluded ignorance, one realizes that the phenomenal world is empty, pure, and indescribable.

V. THE GATEWAY OF THE MIND AS BIRTH AND DEATH

According to the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*: “The Mind as phenomena (*saṃsāra*) is grounded in the *tathāgatagarbha*. What is called the storehouse consciousness is that in which “neither birth nor death (*nirvāṇa*)” diffuse harmoniously with “birth and death (*saṃsāra*),” and yet in which both are neither identical nor different (心生灭者，依如来藏故有生灭心，所谓不生不灭与生灭和合，非一非异，名为阿黎耶识。))”⁵ The gateway of the mind as birth and death refers to the illusory phenomenal world that exists due to ignorance. This gate takes ignorance as its root and *Tathāgatagarbha* as its essence. *Tathāgatagarbha* is neither arising nor ceasing, it is the original nature of suchness, which is covered by ignorance. Birth and death are the dependent phenomena caused by ignorance. The birth and death of delusion are based on the unborn and undead *Tathāgatagarbha*. The combination of suchness and ignorance is known as the Store Consciousness (阿赖耶识). This consciousness can contain all the contaminated and uncontaminated *Dharmas* in the mundane and supra-mundane worlds, and give rise to all differentiated phenomena because it has two aspects of enlightenment and non-enlightenment. To practice the noble path, we can clean the three Karmas of body, speech, and mind, gradually reduce delusions and evil karma, eliminate evil and cultivate good, purify the mind to transform consciousness into wisdom, destroy our ignorance and deluded thoughts, and help us free from non-enlightenment. Then, we can move from the mind as birth and death to the mind as suchness. Therefore, practicing the noble path is an important way to change our fortune from non-enlightenment to enlightenment for inner peace and world peace.

To summarize, all the worldly and unworldly *Dharmas* are included in One Mind, which is divided into two aspects: the gateway of the mind as suchness

⁴ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 12 - 13.

⁵ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 16.

and the gateway of the mind as birth and death. The former one is pure and the latter one is impure. It shows the two states of One Mind-enlightenment and non-enlightenment, which is the difference between the *Buddhas* and living beings. If one wants to get enlightenment from ignorance, one needs to practice the noble path, and one can transform one's fortune for self-awareness and world peace.

Regarding the practicable methods of attaining inner peace and world peace, the *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra* provides some ways of practical theory to guide people. The sections that follow will discuss it in detail.

VI. THE PRACTICAL METHODS OF ATTAINING INNER PEACE AS DEPICTED IN MAHĀYĀNA-ŚRADDHOTPĀDA ŚĀSTRA

Inner peace is the foundation of world peace. Real peace is derived from our minds rather than the restriction of outside laws or precepts. World peace is reflected in inner peace. If we could eradicate our defilements and deluded thoughts to realize our inner peace and purification, world conflicts would have dissolved and world peace would have been achieved in the real sense. There are some practical methods of attaining inner peace as depicted in *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*, for example, the detachment from deluded thoughts, the permeation of suchness, *Śamatha* and *Vipaśyanā*, the practice of the Pure Land Method of *Amitābha*, etc. These theories involve the peaceful thought of practice. This section will discuss the practical methods for achieving inner peace from three aspects. First, it involves training our minds to be free from deluded thought. Second, is to practice the method of tranquility (*Śamatha*) and insight (*Vipaśyanā*). Finally, it is to practice the Pure Land Method of *Amitābha* for inner stability and peace.

6.1. The method for achieving freedom from deluded thoughts

Regarding the interpretation of suchness, *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra* states that the mind of sentient beings is originally pure, neither arising nor ceasing since they arise as deluded thought to have the differentiated phenomena of birth and death.⁶ If sentient beings wish to transform their minds of arising and ceasing into the true mind that neither arises nor ceases, the important point of practice is to be free from deluded thoughts for inner peace and purification. It is only one who is detached from deluded thoughts of arising and ceasing can enter into the true mind of non-arising and non-ceasing, since the essential nature of the mind transcends languages, words, and the phenomenon of arising and ceasing. Practicing the method of detachment from delusions one should pay attention to purifying the mind rather than merely restraining behavior. If one can purify one's mind, one's deeds of body and speech will be naturally pure and peaceful.

How does one abandon illusions, destroy ignorance, enlighten the mind as suchness, and attain inner peace and purification? If one wants to be freed from

⁶ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 12.

deluded thoughts, one should first understand what thought is. Why must one be freed from it? And how can one abandon it?

The Sanskrit term “*Smṛti*” means “thought”, or “active state of mind”. In this treatise, it refers to deluded thoughts or the illusory mind. This mind is originally pure, due to the mind as suchness failing to abide in its nature, it does not feel the mental activity, giving rise to distorted and deluded thoughts. The perceiving mind clings to the perceived objects, creates a lot of distinctions, and generates various differentiations of the mundane world. From this, it could be known that delusive thoughts originate from ignorance or non-awareness. According to the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*: “All things are originally of the mind only; they transcend thoughts. Nevertheless, the deluded mind, in non-enlightenment, gives rise to irrelevant thoughts and predicates the world of objects. This being the case, we define this mentality as ‘the state of being destitute of wisdom’ (*Avidyā*: ignorance) (以一切法本来唯心，实无于念，而有妄心，不觉念起，见诸境界故说无明。).”⁷ The delusional thoughts arise from this mind, and they are illusory and unreal. In essence, thoughts are empty and their arising natures can be discerned. Sentient beings are ignorant and confused, so they cling to their illusions as if they are real. Consequently, their deluded thoughts continue one by one in their minds, leading them to rebirth in the *Saṃsāra* endlessly. If they are not aware and freed from deluded thoughts, they cannot transcend the *Saṃsāra* to get inner peace and liberation.

How is one freed from the deluded thoughts and attain inner peace and purity? According to the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

The mind itself is devoid of any form or mark and is, therefore, unobtainable as such, no matter where one may seek it. Just as a man, because he has lost his way, mistakes the east for the west, though the actual directions have not changed place, so people, because of their ignorance, assume Mind (suchness) to be what they think it to be, though mind is unaffected even if it is falsely predicted. If a person is able to observe and understand that the Mind is beyond what it is thought to be, then he will be able to conform to and enter the realm of suchness (以心无形相，十方求之终不可得。如人迷故谓东为西，方实不转。众生亦尔，无明迷故谓心为念，心实不动。若能观察知心无念，即得随顺入真如门故。).⁸

This mind has no form or appearance. Seeking it through a discriminating mind will only be in vain since it is unreal. The mind raises deluded thoughts caused by ignorance, to distinguish the subjective mind and objective phenomena, and thus the cycle of birth and death continues. It is like a person without a sense of direction, mistaking the east for the west. The actual

⁷ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 45.

⁸ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 52.

directions do not change. Thus, he strays further and further away, and goes in the wrong direction because of his wrong thoughts. Similarly, the root of all good and bad actions lies in the ignorance and delusional thoughts of the mind, they are unreal. To practice the method of detachment from deluded thoughts, one must first eliminate distracting thoughts from the mind. Through continuous practice, carefully protecting the mind, recognizing the illusory nature of thoughts, and removing the distinctions between subject and object, all delusions are extinguished, ignorance is eliminated, so that one can purify one's mind, enlighten one's mind as suchness, and realize this mind beyond all thoughts and descriptions.

It is known that inner purity and peace are important to practice the method of detachment from deluded thoughts. Since the purity or defilement of the mind will directly affect the behavior of the body and speech, the key to practicing the method of detachment from deluded thoughts lies in purifying the mind and destroying delusional thoughts. *Mahāyāna* Buddhism emphasizes that one should not only control unwholesome deeds of body and speech but also purify the inner distractions, to achieve the purity of the mind. The “method of detachment from deluded thoughts” is the practicable method for inner peace and purity in *the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*. Practicing this method of detachment from deluded thoughts to extinguish delusional thoughts, purifies the mind, and attains purity and peace in the three karmas of body, speech, and mind, which is the authentic practice.

6.2. The methods of tranquility (*Śamatha*) and insight (*Vipaśyanā*)

The practice of tranquility and insight is a practical method of a Bodhisattva to eradicate ignorance and increase awareness. Before one practices tranquility and insight, one should first observe precepts. *The Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)* mentions that:

There are five ways of practice which will enable a person to perfect his faith. There are the practices of charity, observance of precepts, patience, zeal, and cessation of illusions and clear observation... Question: How should he practice the observance of precepts? Answer: He is not to kill, steal, commit adultery, be double-tongued, slander, lie, or utter exaggerated speech. He is to free himself from greed, jealousy, cheating, deceit, flattery, crookedness, anger, hatred, and perverse views. If he happens to be a monk or nun who has renounced family life, he should also, in order to cut off and suppress defilements, keep himself away from the hustle and bustle of the world and, always reside in solitude, should learn to be content with the least desire and should practice vigorous ascetic disciplines. He should be frightened and filled with awe by any slight fault and should feel shame and repent. He should not take lightly any of the *Tathāgata's* precepts. He should guard himself from slander and from showing dislike so as not to rouse people in their delusion to commit any offense or sin (修行有五门，能成此信。云何为五？一者、施门，二者、戒门，三者、忍门，四者、进门，五者、止观门。……云何修行戒门？所谓不杀、不盗、不淫、

不两舌、不恶口、不妄言、不绮语，远离贪嫉、欺诳、谄曲、瞋恚、邪见。若出家者为折伏烦恼故，亦应远离愤闹、常处寂静，修习少欲知足头陀等行。乃至小罪心生怖畏，惭愧改悔，不得轻于如来所制禁戒。当护讥嫌，不令众生妄起过罪故。）。⁹

The practice of the Bodhisattva path is based on five ways of practice, among which the practice of observing precepts includes the Bodhisattva's Ten Wholesome Deeds (among them, non-greed has three: staying away from greed and jealousy, cheating and deceit, and flattery and crookedness) and the ordination precepts for monastic monks and nuns. To eliminate all defilements, monastic *Samghas* should stay away from the hustle and bustle of the world, and live in quiet places to practice asceticism. Even slight precepts, they should observe with a sense of shame and repentant minds, to protect the minds of sentient beings, not to slander themselves and Buddhism.¹⁰ If they are pure to observe precepts, they will reduce their distracting thoughts and desires, and avoid their minds being disturbed. Then they are content and peaceful in their minds, which is a beneficial condition for practicing tranquility and insight.

Question: "How should he practice cessation and clear observation?"

Answer: What is called "cessation" means to put a stop to all characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of the world of sense objects and of the mind, because it means to follow the *Śamatha* (tranquility) method of meditation. What is called "clear observation" means to perceive distinctly the characteristics of the causally conditioned phenomena (*Samśāra*), because it means to follow the *Vipaśyanā* (discerning) method of meditation. (云何修行止观门？所言止者，谓止一切境界相，随顺奢摩他观义故。所言观者，谓分别因缘生灭相，随顺毗钵舍那观义故。)。¹¹

"*Śamatha*" refers to the cessation of discriminative and deluded thoughts. It relies on the practical method of the mind as suchness to sit upright in a quiet place, maintain one's mindfulness, and recognize that all external phenomena are illusory; the mind has no self-nature, and thoughts cannot be grasped. Through gradual practice in this way, the mind will become stable and peaceful. As all thoughts are eliminated, no clinging to both body and mind, and the external world. The mind will not be scattered and defilements no longer arise, this is *Śamatha* meditation. "*Vipaśyanā*" means to observe the characteristics of all causal and conditioned phenomena and realize the truth. For example, one may practice the contemplation of this mind as something changing and

⁹ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 72 - 73.

¹⁰ (Japanese) Yusuki Ryoei (汤次了荣), Feng Zi Kai (丰子恺) translated (into Chinese from Japanese): "A New Interpretation of *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (大乘起信论新释)", Zhejiang Province Dharma Propagation to benefit All Beings Association, Hangzhou, China, 1996, p. 85.

¹¹ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 73 - 74.

impermanent, and try to prevent the mind from being drowsy and stagnant, keeping the mind clear for inner peace and awareness.

According to *the Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

The practice of “cessation” will enable ordinary people to cure themselves of their attachments to the world, and will enable the followers of the *Hīnayāna* to forsake their views, which derive from cowardice. The practice of “clear observation” will cure the followers of the *Hīnayāna* of the fault of having narrow and inferior minds that bring forth no great compassion, and will free ordinary people from their failure to cultivate the capacity for goodness. For these reasons, both “cessation” and “clear observation” are complementary and inseparable. If the two are not practiced together, then one cannot enter the path to enlightenment (若修止者，对治凡夫住著世间，能舍二乘怯弱之见。若修观者，对治二乘不起大悲狭劣心过，远离凡夫不修善根。以是义故，是止观二门，共相助成，不相捨离。若止观不具，则无能入菩提之道。)¹²

The main purpose of practicing tranquility and insight is to cure ordinary people’s attachment to the world and their failure to cultivate good roots, because they do not believe in cause and effect. Likewise, the followers of the *Hīnayāna* (*Śrāvaka* and *Pratyekabuddha*) have fear in the cycle of *Samsāra*, and only seek self-liberation and do not save all living beings. Their narrow minds also need to be cured. The practice of tranquility and insight can help ordinary people understand the impermanence and changes of the mundane world, abandon attachment to illusory phenomena, eliminate evils, and cultivate good deeds to accumulate the resources for awareness. The followers of *Hīnayāna* can overcome their timid minds in relation to the *Samsāra*, give rise to the mind of great compassion, empathize with the suffering of sentient beings, and save them to make the resources for Buddhahood. Practitioners can practice cessation of illusion (tranquility) when they are sitting, and practice clear observation (insight) at other times. After they practice those two for a long time, they will be proficient in both. Then they can practice both cessation of illusion and clear observation together without separation. At this moment, they contemplate emptiness without attachment, and dependent and existent phenomena in the absence of clinging. They have conformed to the mind as suchness that is neither arising nor ceasing. If they succeed in the practice of cessation of illusion, they can attain the fundamental wisdom of non-discrimination (根本无分别智) and realize the mind as suchness is originally pure. If they succeed in the practice of clear observation, they can get the wisdom of subsequent attainment (后得智), the wisdom of understanding the differentiations of all the phenomena in the mundane world.¹³

¹² *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 79.

¹³ Yusuki Ryoei, Feng Zi Kai translated: “*A New Interpretation of The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*”, Zhejiang Province Dharma Propagation to benefit All Beings Association,

6.3. The pure land method of *Amitābha*

There are many Pure Land methods, not only *Amitābha*'s Pure Land of Western Paradise (*Sukhāvatī*), but also *Maitreya*'s Heaven, the Eastern Pure Land of Lapis Lazuli (*Vaidūryanirbhāsā* 琉璃世界) of Medicine Buddha, and others. Here, I discourse on *Amitābha*'s Pure Land due to its relative prevalence in this world. If there are beginners who do not have the right faith in Buddhism, their mental strength is weak; they lack good external conditions to meet admirable Dharma friends (*Kalyāṇa-mitrata* 善知识) in the enduring world (*Sahālokadhātu* 娑婆世界); they fear in the *Saṃsāra*, and cannot rely on self-power to attain liberation—such individuals may rely on the other power of the great vows of *Amitābha* Buddha to be saved. They could practice the Pure Land method of *Amitābha* Buddha, recite his name with diligence, dedicate all the wholesome roots they have cultivated to the Pure Land of Western Paradise, and make a vow to be reborn there. At the moment of their death, if they can be single-minded to recite the Buddha's name, they will be reborn in the Western Pure Land of *Amitābha* Buddha, see the Buddha when the lotus blooms, and never regress or fall into evil realms.¹⁴

As stated in *the Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

There is a person who learns this teaching for the first time and wishes to seek the correct faith but lacks courage and strength. Because he lives in this world of suffering, he fears that he will not always be able to meet the *Buddhas* and honor them personally, and that, faith being difficult to perfect, he will be inclined to fall back. He should know that the *Tathāgatas* have an excellent expedient means by which they can protect his faith: that is, through the strength of wholehearted meditation on the Buddha, he will in fulfillment of his wishes be able to be born in the Buddha land beyond, to see the Buddha always, and to be forever separated from the evil states of existence. It is as the *sūtra* says: "If a person meditates wholly on *Amitābha* Buddha in the world of the Western Paradise and wishes to be born in that world, directing all the goodness he has cultivated toward that goal, then he will be born there." Because he will see the Buddha at all times, he will never fall back. If he meditates on the *Dharmakāya*, the suchness of the Buddha, and with diligence keeps practicing the meditation, he will be able to be born there in the end because he abides in the correct *Samādhi* (众生初学是法欲求正信，其心怯弱。以住于此娑婆世界，自畏不能常值诸佛、亲承供养。惧谓信心难可成就，意欲退者，当知如来有胜方便摄护信心。谓以专意念佛因缘，随愿得生他方佛土，常见于佛永离恶道。如修多罗说，若人专念西方极乐世界阿弥陀佛，所修善根，回向愿求生彼世界，即得往生，常见佛故，终无有退。若观彼佛真如法身，常勤修习毕竟得

Hangzhou, China, 1996, p. 86 - 88.

¹⁴ Shi Yinshun (释印顺): *A Commentary on the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (大乘起信论讲记), CBETA Vol. 7, p. 177 - 178.

生，住正定故。)¹⁵

If one can contemplate *Amitābha* Buddha's *Dharmakāya* of suchness when reciting the Buddha's name, and practice it diligently, not only will one be able to be reborn in *Amitābha*'s Pure Land at the time of death, but one will also be able to abide in the correct *Samādhi*,¹⁶ achieve faith, and attain supreme perfect enlightenment (*Anuttara Samyaksambodhi* 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提). Even if one is not born in the Western Pure Land, one will be able to enter the initial stage of aspiration (*Cittotpāda-bhūmi* 发心住) and not lose the Bodhi mind.¹⁷

Here it is mentioned that there are four conditions to rebirth in the Pure Land of Western Paradise, they are: (1) concentrating on reciting the Buddha's name; (2) diligently cultivating wholesome roots; (3) dedicating merits toward the Western Pure Land; and (4) making a vow to be reborn there.¹⁸ Among them, diligently cultivating wholesome roots is the key point. The *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* defines wholesome roots as encompassing the Ten Wholesome Deeds, the Three Categories of Pure Bodhisattva Precepts, the Four Faiths, and the Five Practices, etc.

According to *A New Interpretation of the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, Bodhisattvas need to practice for three incalculable eons (*Asaṃkhyeya kalpas* 阿僧祇劫), and then, they can attain Buddhahood through arising faith in *Mahāyāna*, attempting to understand its profound teachings and practice its perfection. Bodhisattvas who have faith in *Mahāyāna* and aspiration for enlightenment, chiefly practice the Ten Wholesome Deeds. Because they have a belief in causes and effects undoubtedly, they have the ability of self-discipline and pure permeation to cultivate their wholesome roots. If they practice it after ten thousand eons, their faiths will be perfected. The *Buddhas* and Bodhisattvas instruct them to develop three kinds of minds: The first is to aspire to a straight mind (直心), which is mindful of the mind as suchness, corresponds to the noble path, and can destroy all evils. It belongs to the "Precepts of Discipline (摄律仪戒)" in the Three Categories of Pure Bodhisattva Precepts. The second is to aspire to a profound mind (深心), which delights in accumulating all wholesome deeds. This corresponds to the "Precepts for Wholesome Dharmas (摄善法戒)". The third is the mind of great compassion (大悲心), which aspires to relieve the suffering of all sentient beings, and is covered by the "Precepts for Benefiting Sentient Beings (摄众生戒)". Bodhisattvas who have perfected faith and aspiration, are capable of eradicating unwholesome

¹⁵ *The Awakening of Faith*, Śvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 79 - 80.

¹⁶ Yusuki Ryoei, Feng Zi Kai translated: "A New Interpretation of The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna", Zhejiang Province Dharma Propagation to benefit All Beings Association, Hangzhou, China, 1996, p. 42.

¹⁷ Shi Yinshun: *A Commentary on the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, CBETA Vol. 7, p. 178.

¹⁸ Shi Yinshun: *A Commentary on the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, CBETA Vol. 7, p. 178.

actions, cultivating wholesome deeds, and saving sentient beings. They have wisdom and do not remain attached to the cycle of *Saṃsāra* (有智不住生死), and have compassion and do not abide by *Nirvāṇa* (有悲不住涅槃). This is because they harmonize with the Dharma nature of true suchness, remaining free from attachment and clinging.¹⁹

In showing the Reasons for Āśvaghoṣa to write *the Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*, it is pointed out that: “The fourth reason is to encourage those whose capacity for goodness is still slight to cultivate the faithful mind.”²⁰ To explain it, Han-Shan De-Qing (憨山德清) said that to enable beings with slight wholesome roots to develop four kinds of faith and cultivate five ways of practice, they gradually perfect their wholesome roots. Hence, Āśvaghoṣa Bodhisattva wrote this treatise.²¹ Here, the four kinds of faith are: (1) faith in the ultimate source, due to meditating with joy on the principle of suchness; (2) faith in the numberless excellent qualities of the *Buddhas*; (3) faith in the great benefits of the Dharma; and (4) faith in the *Samgha*’s ability to cultivate the right path for the welfare of self and others.²² The five ways of practice are: the practices of charity, observance of precepts, patience, zeal (diligence), and cessation of illusions (tranquility), and clear observation (insight).²³

Whether they are Ten Wholesome Deeds, or the Three Categories of Pure Bodhisattva Precepts, the Four Faiths, and the Five Practices, they are to accumulate the sources of wholesome roots for rebirth in the Pure Land of Western Paradise. As one’s wholesome conditions are mature, it becomes possible for one to be reborn there. Even though one is not reborn in the Western Pure Land as one’s wholesome condition is immature, one could still achieve the faith of perfection to aspire for enlightenment without losing one’s Bodhi Mind, since one has accorded with the mind as suchness while one often contemplates the *Amitābha* Buddha’s *Dharmakāya* of suchness.

The above discussion provides a summary exploration of the practical methods of inner purification and peace as presented in *the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* from three perspectives. Practitioners may choose one or more approaches to practice based on their capacities and interests. One approach is to purify the mind through the practice of the “method of detachment from deluded thought,” removing distracting thoughts to achieve inner

¹⁹ Yusuki Ryoei, Feng Zi Kai translated: “A New Interpretation of *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*”, Zhejiang Province Dharma Propagation to benefit All Beings Association, Hangzhou, China, 1996, p. 80 - 81.

²⁰ *The Awakening of Faith*, Āśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 5.

²¹ De-Qing (德清): *Straightforward Explanation of the Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* (起信论直解), CBETA Vol. 45, p. 9.

²² *The Awakening of Faith*, Āśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 71.

²³ *The Awakening of Faith*, Āśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 72.

purification and stability. Alternatively, practitioners can cultivate the “method of tranquility and insight” by observing precepts, which leads to wisdom, and eradicate their ignorance and defilements caused by ignorance. Or they can practice the method of *Amitābha* Pure Land, contemplate *Amitābha’s Dharmakāya* of suchness, and accumulate the sources of wholesome roots for rebirth in the Pure Land of Western Paradise. No matter which method, it emphasizes the purification of the mind and the removal of ignorance and defilements for inner peace. It is only when one’s practice corresponds to the mind as suchness, that one can achieve the ultimate goal of eliminating ignorance, realize the truth, and return to the inner “Pure Land” and peace. Although these practical methods are different, their purpose is the same, to achieve inner peace and freedom.

VII. INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE AS DESCRIBED IN MAHĀYĀNA-ŚRADDHOTPĀDA ŚĀSTRA

As one gets inner peace and purification, one should save others for world peace, which should be done as one practices the Bodhisattva path. Regarding attaining world peace, *the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* emphasizes the cultivation of equal and merciful minds and their propagation.

7.1. The cultivation of equal mind and its propagation

The mind as suchness of all sentient beings is equal without distinctions, since it is originally pure in the absence of change in its nature, neither increasing nor decreasing. As one realizes it and attains inner peace and purification, one could raise an equal mind to attempt to understand others, and one’s prejudice and ill-will will be weak to those whom one dislikes as all conflicts and controversies are often derived from our unequal minds. If we want to maintain world peace, we need to first cultivate an equal mind. From the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*, we know that all sentient beings have the mind as suchness which is originally pure. When we give rise to deluded thoughts, it leads our minds to be impure and unequal, and to distinguish the differentiations of all phenomena.²⁴ Therefore, we give rise to a lot of defilements to take action resulting in a lot of problems and controversies. Once we are acquainted with it, we should develop equal minds to treat everyone without distinction. When we know how to communicate with others equally, respect each other, and live in harmony, we are capable of dissolving conflicts and contradictions between people, as stated in the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

The great vow of universal salvation. This is to take a vow that one will liberate all sentient beings, down to the last one, no matter how long it may take to cause them to attain the perfect *Nirvāṇa*, for one will be conforming oneself to the essential nature of reality which is characterized by the absence of discontinuity. The essential nature of reality is all-embracing, and pervades all sentient beings; it is everywhere

²⁴ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 12.

the same and one without duality; it does not distinguish this from that, because it is, in the final analysis, in the state of quiescence (大愿平等方便。所谓发愿尽于未来，化度一切众生使无有余，皆令究竟无余涅槃，以随顺法性无断绝故，法性广大，遍一切众生，平等无二，不念彼此，究竟寂灭故。)²⁵

If we want to perfect our enlightenment, we need to practice the Bodhisattva path and make a great vow to save all sentient beings equally, until all beings are relieved and get perfect liberation, we will perfect our merits and wisdom for the attainment of the Buddhahood. At that time, we can be equal to everyone in a real sense, and where we live will be a peaceful world, since our minds are completely equal and peaceful, resulting in our world being peaceful.

Furthermore, we not only cultivate our equal minds, but also propagate this idea to lead more people to develop it, from individuals to Buddhist communities, societies, countries, and the world for the maintenance of world peace. For instance, we should be holding some international Buddhist activities and conferences to open up our minds and increase the understanding and forgiveness between different traditions of Buddhism. If all Buddhists can dialog equally, Buddhist inner contradictions could be dealt with effectively, to improve Buddhist unity and cooperation in diversity, which is powerful to propagate equal ideas. If Buddhists succeed in making achievements in this aspect, other people would believe it. There is a proverb in China: “Facts are more convincing than words (事实胜于雄辩).” If Buddhist communities are unequal, we cannot dialog peacefully. It will increase a lot of misunderstanding and hatred, resulting in conflicts and contradictions in Buddhism. If we cannot solve our internal problems, how do we manage social problems and world conflicts? It is impossible to achieve it. Only if we know how to respect each other, attempt to understand others, and equally exchange with others in opinions, will we be able to transform our inherent cognitions and prejudices toward others, become sympathetic to others’ suffering, and assist them with some problems related to Buddhist peace. After that, we become competent to deal with social problems for the promotion of world peace, as the essential element of social agitation is often caused by inequality and injustice between people. Therefore, the cultivation of an equal mind and its propagation is of extraordinary importance for social stability and world peace.

7.2. The cultivation of merciful mind and its transmission

If we have a merciful mind, we will reduce others’ hatred and hostility towards us and not have enemies and obstacles in the Bodhisattva path. How do we initiate a merciful mind to save all sentient beings? According to the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*, we should observe that beings are permeated by ignorance and have to endure the suffering of body and mind in *Saṃsāra*. However, they are unaware of it. As a bodhisattva, if we do not save them, they cannot be freed from suffering. We should sympathize with

²⁵ *The Awakening of Faith*, Aśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 63-64.

others, in the absence of discrimination, to help them be free from suffering and achieve the ultimate goal of liberation.²⁶ As we help others to attain freedom, we will be aware of the mundane world at the same time, since we have already known the methods of getting enlightenment. All Bodhisattvas attain Buddhahood because they perfect their compassion and wisdom, and this is what all sentient beings need to achieve. If there are no beings that need to be relieved, a Bodhisattva cannot be perfect in his practice of *Pāramitās*. Consequently, we should raise a merciful mind to save living beings for the accomplishment of perfect enlightenment and world peace.

The cultivation of a merciful mind involves the practices of Six *Pāramitās*, Four All-Embracing Virtues (*Catvāri saṃgraha-vastūni* 四摄), and so on. The *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)* takes into account whether the aspirations for enlightenment through the perfection of faith (信成就发心), understanding and deeds perfection (解行发心), and insight perfection (证发心), all stages of Bodhisattvas need to initiate the mind of great compassion to practice Six *Pāramitās* for the salvation of living beings.²⁷ Six *Pāramitās* are the perfections of charity, precepts, patience, zeal, meditation, and wisdom.²⁸ Apart from that, Bodhisattvas also need to practice the Four All-Embracing Virtues²⁹, as depicted in the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*:

A person, from the time when he first aspires to seek enlightenment until he becomes an Enlightened One, sees or meditates on the *Buddhas* and bodhisattvas as they manifest themselves to him; sometimes they appear as his family members, parents, or relatives, sometimes as servants, sometimes as close friends, or sometimes as enemies. Through all kinds of deeds and incalculable performances, such as the practice of the four acts of loving-kindness, etc., they exercise the force of permeation created by their great compassion, and are thus able to cause sentient beings to strengthen their capacity for goodness and can benefit them as they see or hear about their needs (此人依于诸佛菩萨等，从初发意始求道时乃至得佛，于中若见若念，或为眷属父母诸亲，或为给使，或为知友，或为冤家，或起四摄，乃至一切所作无量行缘，以起大悲熏习之力，能令众生增长善根，若见若闻得利益故。).³⁰

In the process of practicing the Bodhisattva path, a Bodhisattva will

²⁶ *The Awakening of Faith*, Śvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 78 - 79.

²⁷ *The Awakening of Faith*, Śvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 62 - 67.

²⁸ *The Awakening of Faith*, Śvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 65 - 66.

²⁹ Four All-Embracing Virtues are: Generosity, Kind Words, Beneficial Deeds, and Fellowship.

³⁰ *The Awakening of Faith*, Śvaghōṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 41.

manifest different identities to benefit diverse people. Sometimes he appears as their family members, or parents, or practices the Four All-Embracing Virtues, to increase their goodness for their salvation. If he persistently develops his merciful mind to practice the beneficial deeds of Six *Pāramitās* and Four All-Embracing Virtues without regression, as he accumulates his compassion and wisdom completely, he can attain the perfect enlightenment. His world will be peaceful since his mind is peaceful and pure thoroughly.

Except for the self-cultivation of the merciful mind, we also need to transmit this idea to prompt more people to raise the merciful mind, because personal power is very weak and limited. Differently, collective forces are powerful for the unity of Buddhist communities and world peace. Āśvaghoṣa said this treatise was also to circulate and transmit this truth for the relief of sentient beings. If we do not disseminate the merciful idea, social stability and world peace will be difficult to sustain, because we have numerous defilements to cause social disturbances and world wars. Therefore, the transmission of a merciful mind is considerable for world peace. As a Dharma teacher or a Buddhist leader, we have responsibilities to guide people to destroy evil thoughts and practice good deeds for social harmony and world peace. However, the best propagation for that is our kind and friendly deeds from our inner mercy. When we are peaceful and merciful, we will demonstrate good deeds of body and words to impact the people who are close to us and will feel comfortable and secure in their minds. Where we live, the community will be peaceful and friendly, because our mercy and wisdom naturally dissolve the contradictions and enmities between people. Because we have the mind of great compassion, we will sympathize with others' suffering, and listen to others, hearing what they want to say to us. As we know their situations, we attempt to improve their states in their difficult times, to facilitate the harmony of the community and world peace. This is powerful to missionize peaceful ideas for world peace.

We could choose many ways to transmit merciful ideas in the world, such as delivering lectures, writing books and papers, translating Buddhist scriptures, holding international conferences and activities online or offline, to spread the ideas of mercy for social stability and world peace from Buddhist perspectives.

Therefore, the cultivation of an equal and merciful mind is crucially important for individuals in Buddhist communities, societies, countries, and the world. All of the *Dharmas* of the phenomenal world and the transcendental world originate from our minds.³¹ If we want to maintain world peace, we need to train our minds to be equal in the cultivation of loving kindness, putting aside discrimination against others. It is only when our minds are equal and merciful, Buddhist communities will live in harmony, to impact societies, countries, and the world.

³¹ *The Awakening of Faith*, Āśvaghoṣa, translated by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, 2005, p. 7.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper is based on the four aspects of the fundamental purpose of *Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*, the significance of two aspects of one mind, the practical methods of attaining inner peace as depicted in this treatise, and moving from inner peace to world peace as described in the treatise. It demonstrates that its ultimate goal is to let people believe in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, follow its doctrines to practice, eliminate ignorance and attain the mind as suchness for self-purification and world peace. This study provides some methods of practical theory for practitioners to achieve inner peace and world peace, such as the practices of non-thoughts, tranquility and insight, the Pure Land Method of *Amitābha*, equality, and mercy. Whether it is inner peace or world peace, they do not leave our minds to discourse alone. It is only when one's mind is pure and peaceful, that one can influence other people for Buddhist unity, social harmony, and world peace. As stated in the *Awakening of Faith (in Mahāyāna)*, all of *Dharmas* of mundane and supra-mundane worlds are involved in One Mind, which is the mind as suchness. If we can return to the original mind of suchness through practicing these methods, our world will be peaceful, because our minds are peaceful and pure. Therefore, it is said that a peaceful world starts from our minds.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: WHAT THE BUDDHA SAYS ABOUT PEACE ACCORDING TO THE PALI CANON

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Astract:

This paper examines the Buddha's teachings on peace and conflict resolution as presented in the Pāli Canon, emphasizing the role of inner transformation in fostering world peace. The Buddha acknowledges that conflict, hostility, and war are intrinsic to human society, yet he asserts that individuals can cultivate peace within themselves. The Sakkapañha Sutta identifies the root causes of conflict as jealousy, stinginess, and ultimately the proliferation of perceptions that reinforce the illusion of self. By addressing these underlying causes through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and wisdom, individuals can break the cycle of violence and contribute to a more harmonious society.

The study explores Buddhist strategies for reducing societal conflict, including policies that minimize power corruption, promote generosity, and encourage inclusivity. The practice of renunciation and meditation offers a refuge from the sensory world, allowing individuals to develop true inner peace. Historical and contemporary examples, such as Emperor Ashoka's transformation, illustrate how Buddhist principles can influence leadership and governance. The research concludes that while absolute peace in society may be unattainable, personal transformation has a ripple effect, promoting unity and reducing conflict. By embodying Buddhist teachings, individuals become catalysts for peace, influencing communities and even leadership at broader levels.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace, conflict resolution, mindfulness, non-violence, wisdom, compassion, self-transformation.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

When everyone wants peace and harmony, why is it that we have conflict, violence, and war?

This is a paraphrase of a remarkably perceptive question asked of the Buddha by none other than Sakka, the ruler of the gods.¹ It is indeed a strange conundrum that demands an explanation. If an answer can be found to this question, then perhaps we can break the age-old curse of violence that has always plagued humanity. We need to know how the Buddha replied to this question.

What we discover, of course, is that there is no easy answer, even for the Buddha. Essentially what the Buddha says is that conflict, hostility, and even war are an integral part of human society. We may be able to reduce violence and war by structuring our societies in skilful ways, but we will never be able to overcome them completely. These unfortunate expressions of our human nature are hardwired into human relations.

But, says the Buddha, even if conflict cannot be eliminated society-wide, it can be dealt with on an individual basis. By understanding the causes of conflict within each one of us, we can undertake the work to become personal messengers of peace. As we achieve an inner state of balance and harmony, our state of peace will ripple out into society and affect many more people than just ourselves. In this way, each one of us can have real impact on the world. Occasionally, we may even touch people in powerful positions, thus spreading the message of peace and unity to the population at large.

II. THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

In the famous Sakkapañha Sutta, the Discourse on Sakka's Questions, Sakka asks a question of the Buddha with profound implications. Here is the question in full:

“Dear sir, what fetters bind the gods, humans, titans, dragons, centaurs—and any of the other diverse creatures—so that, though they wish to be free of enmity, violence, hostility, and hate, they still have enmity, violence, hostility, and hate?”²

There is an obvious contradiction here between how we want the world to be and how it is. It seems natural to think that we would have created a society that reflects our deep desires. But this has not happened. Why might that be?

Curiously, such a seemingly obvious question is not asked more often. Perhaps it is the case that humans are so used to conflict and violence that we tend to take it for granted. Perhaps it takes an astute observer from outside the human realm, like Sakka, to gain the necessary perspective on human society.

¹ DN 21, <https://suttacentral.net/dn21/en/sujato#2.1.2>.

² DN 21, <https://suttacentral.net/dn21/en/sujato#2.1.2>. This sutta is also found in several places in the Āgamas of the Chinese Buddhist Canon, including at DĀ 14, MĀ 134, and T 15, see <https://suttacentral.net/dn21>.

This *sutta*, then, contains a meaningful and profound interaction between two extraordinary beings, with the Buddha giving an especially interesting analysis of the causes of conflict.

In answer to Sakka, the Buddha says the following:

“Lord of gods, the fetters of jealousy and stinginess bind the gods, humans, titans, dragons, centaurs—and any of the other diverse creatures—so that, though they wish to be free of enmity, violence, hostility, and hate, they still have enmity, violence, hostility, and hate.”

Here the focus is on wanting what belongs to others and not wishing to share what is one's own. When these impulses are acted upon, it is clear enough that they will result in conflict and violence, and ultimately even in war.

But the conversation does not stop there. Sakka next asks for the causes behind jealousy and stinginess. As the Buddha replies, Sakka asks for further causes, and so the conversation continues until it reaches the deepest cause of all. Here is the full sequence of questions and answers:

“But dear sir, what is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of jealousy and stinginess? When what exists is there jealousy and stinginess? When what doesn't exist is there no jealousy and stinginess?”

“The liked and the disliked, lord of gods, are the source of jealousy and stinginess. When the liked and the disliked exist, there is jealousy and stinginess. When the liked and the disliked don't exist, there is no jealousy and stinginess.”

“But dear sir, what is the source of what is liked and disliked?”

“Desire is the source of what is liked and disliked.”

“But what is the source of desire?”

“Thought is the source of desire.”

“But what is the source of thought?”

“Judgments driven by the proliferation of perceptions are the source of thoughts.”

So, the root cause of conflict, violence, and war is “judgments driven by the proliferation of perceptions”.

What is this proliferation? This is what Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda has to say in his insightful study “Concept and Reality”:

“*Papañca*’ ... is a more comprehensive term hinting at the tendency of the worldling’s imagination to break loose and run riot ... ‘*papañca*’ seems to signify chaos. ... In any case, the ‘expansion’ or ‘diffusion’ of thought as envisaged by ‘*papañca*’ tends to obscure the true state of affairs since it is an unwarranted deviation giving rise to obsession. This particular nuance in the meaning of the term becomes obvious when ‘*papañca*’ is used to denote verbosity or circumlocution.”³

³ Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda (1971), *The passage is abbreviated to bring out the main characteristics*

Based on a careful study of the Suttas, especially the Madhupiṇḍaka Sutta,⁴ Ñāṇananda goes on to show that this tendency to proliferation is caused by craving, conceit, and views. These, in turn, are just different manifestations of the delusion of a self.⁵ We have thus arrived at a rather startling conclusion: the final cause of all conflict, including violence and war, is the sense of self, the ego.

This finding has important ramifications for how we should go about our search for peace. Here I wish to consider two such consequences:

- (1) Violence and war can never be entirely eradicated from our societies. We should find ways of reducing their frequency and severity, but we should also know that a utopian society free of conflict and violence is not achievable.
- (2) Conflict can be eliminated at an individual level. Such individual harmony will have a positive effect on society at large.

As to the first consequence, the reason violence cannot be eliminated is that uprooting the sense of self is an individual concern and cannot happen to society as a whole. The vast majority of humans will, at any one time, be ruled by their sense of self to a greater or lesser extent. That this sense of self is ultimately a delusion does not make any difference. Ordinary people, even most Buddhists, are motivated in their actions by how they experience themselves and the world, not by the true nature of reality as discovered by the Buddha.

This does not mean we cannot reduce conflict. We can structure our societies and educate our populations in such ways that we minimise the impact of the human ego. For instance, it is probably not a good idea for leaders to remain in positions of power for too long. Long exposure to power often has a corrupting effect on individuals that may, in the long run, lead to an increase in conflict in or between societies.⁶ It follows that conflict may be reduced by setting limits on how long individuals may hold positions of power within society.⁷

of papañca as understood by Ñāṇananda. p. 4.

⁴ MN 18, “The Honey-Cake Discourse”, <https://suttacentral.net/mn18/en/sujato>.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 10 - 11.

⁶ There is the well-known adage attributed to Lord Acton that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. More specifically, according to Paul Mdumi (21 September 2024) of the Chanzo Initiative, “As we look around the world today, it’s clear that the obstacles to peace are many, but there is one subtle, insidious force that threatens peace in ways we often overlook: ego.” A similar view is expressed by Brittney-Nichole Connor-Savarda (1 June 2023) in the Emotional Intelligence Magazine +: “But what is it that stops us from recognizing our commonalities and working together towards a more harmonious world? The answer lies within the human ego and its involvement in divisiveness.”

⁷ In DN 16, the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, the Buddha recommends communal decision making: “As long as the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings, they can expect growth, not decline. ... As long as the Vajjis meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they can expect growth, not decline.” <https://suttacentral.net/dn16/en/sujato#1.4.5>.

Another example is the effect of nationalism on the sense of self. Nationalism manifests as a strong identification with a particular people or country, which leads to an us-and-them view of the world, with a consequently increased potential for conflict between nations.⁸ As Buddhists, we can reduce this problem within our organisations and societies by identifying less with our religion and more with its practice. That is, if we see ourselves as kind and compassionate people, rather than merely as Buddhists, we are far less likely to find ourselves in conflict with non-Buddhists.

Such reduction in conflict is especially powerful when guided by Buddhist principles. In the Suttas, we find a group of four qualities, known as the “causes for bringing (people) together”, that foster inclusivity and unity. The four are generosity, kind words, caring actions, and impartiality.⁹ According to one *sutta*, a lay follower of the Buddha called Hatthaka of Āḷavi had an entourage of 500 people as a consequence of his practice of these principles.¹⁰ No doubt the Buddha himself practiced them, which must be one reason for his large and growing community of disciples, both monastic and lay.¹¹

The second consequence of our finding is that true and final peace can be found on the individual level. According to the Buddha, it is possible to eliminate our false sense of self. This, in turn, leads to a life of harmony with one’s fellow humans: “Standing in judgment, Measuring by their standard, they dispute with the world more and more. But a person who has given up all judgments creates no conflict in the world.”¹²

“Ascetics have no conflict in the world.”¹³ “If you still yourself Like a broken gong, you reach extinguishment and know no conflict.”¹⁴

[The Buddhas said:] “My doctrine is such that one does not conflict with anyone in this world with its gods, Māras, and Divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans.”¹⁵

⁸ See for instance Joseph Frankel (19 January 2025) of the Encyclopedia Britannica, who has this to say on this topic: “Nationalism not only induces wars but, through the severity of its influence, makes compromise and acceptance of defeat more difficult.”

⁹ The *saṅgha-vatthus*, found for instance at AN 4.32, <https://suttacentral.net/an4.32/en/sujato>.

¹⁰ AN 8.24, <https://suttacentral.net/an8.24/en/sujato>.

¹¹ Much more could be said about the reduction in conflict through the application of Buddhist principles, but it would be too much of a side issue for a paper focusing on inner peace. Another paper would be required to tackle this topic.

¹² Cūḷavyūha Sutta, “The Shorter Discourse on Arrayed for Battle”, Snp 4.12, <https://suttacentral.net/snp4.12/en/sujato#vns901>.

¹³ Araṇa Sutta, “Without conflict”, SN 1.81, <https://suttacentral.net/sn1.81/en/sujato#3.1>. According to the commentary, “ascetic”, *samaṇa*, here refers to the *arahant*, the fully awakened person.

¹⁴ Dhṛp 134, <https://suttacentral.net/dhp129-145/en/sujato#vns134>.

¹⁵ Madhupiṇḍaka Sutta, “The Honey-cake Discourse”, MN 18, <https://suttacentral.net/mn18/en/sujato#4.1>.

These passages speak of the *arahant*, the fully awakened person. It is at *arahantship* that the sense of self is fully uprooted with the simultaneous elimination of conflict with the world. Still, one does not need to reach the end of the path to reap such benefits, at least partially. With every step towards awakening, one lives in greater harmony with the world.

Although true peace is achieved only at the individual level, there are benefits to society too. Because every individual is bound to interact with society, even a single individual who lives in harmony with the world will positively affect society. Depending on their other personal qualities and their connections to others, this effect can be considerable. In other words, we should not underestimate the contribution to peace that each one of us can make through our practice of Buddhist principles. Before I consider this individual contribution to peace in greater detail, I first wish to explore another way in which the Suttas describe the inevitability of societal conflict and violence.

III. THE COMPETITION FOR SCARCE RESOURCES

In a *sutta* called the Potaliya Sutta, we find another striking description of the inevitability of conflict. In this *sutta* the Buddha illustrates the dangers of the five senses with a series of seven similes.¹⁶ The second of these is given as follows:

Suppose a vulture or a crow or a hawk was to grab a scrap of meat and fly away. Other vultures, crows, and hawks would keep chasing it, pecking and clawing. What do you think, householder? If that vulture, crow, or hawk doesn't quickly let go of that scrap of meat, wouldn't that result in death or deadly suffering for them?

Yes, sir.

In the same way, a noble disciple reflects: 'With the simile of a scrap of meat the Buddha said that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the fuller of drawbacks.' Having truly seen this with right understanding, they reject equanimity based on diversity and develop only the equanimity based on unity, where all kinds of grasping to the worldly pleasures of the flesh cease without anything left over.¹⁷

The meat symbolises the objects of the five senses. The fighting of the birds refers to our competition for, and conflict over, the objects in that realm. The problem with the objects of the five senses – that is, the world around us – is that they belong to our shared experience. Because we tend to desire the

¹⁶ The Pali word I render as "the five senses" is *kāma*. In the singular, as pointed out by the Critical Pali Dictionary, *kāma* refers to the *desire* related to enjoyment in the five senses. In the plural, however, it refers to the *objects* of the five senses. This distinction is also made by the commentaries, which distinguish between *vatthu-kāma* and *kilesa-kāma*, respectively *kāma* as object and *kāma* as desire. In the present *sutta*, *kāma* mostly refers to the objects of the five senses.

¹⁷ MN 54, "With Potaliya the Householder", <https://suttacentral.net/mn54/en/sujato#16.1>.

same things, we compete for them. Competition results in winners and losers, sometimes leading to conflict, violence, and occasionally war.

It is not difficult to see this at play in our societies. We aspire for the same jobs, the same promotion, and the same salary raise. We desire the same partners. We clash over the inheritance from our parents. Such conflicts of interest are seen at all scales in our societies. At the largest scale, countries compete and fight over resources and influence. All this competition will sometimes lead to serious conflict and hostility. It follows that conflict and violence are an inevitable outcome in a world in which we desire and compete for the same shared resources.¹⁸

If conflict is inevitable in the world as we have it, is there anything that can be done to reduce it? The first thing to recognise is that even understanding that there is a problem is helpful. If we know the consequences of unrestrained competition, we are likely to be more careful in how we interact with others. Moreover, by being clear about the nature of the world, we become less interested in it, and instead turn our minds towards the spiritual life. This is precisely what is suggested in the simile of the fighting birds: If that vulture, crow, or hawk doesn't quickly let go of that scrap of meat, wouldn't that result in death or deadly suffering for them?

If the meat symbolises the objects of the five senses, then, to reduce the suffering of conflict and violence, we need to let go of those objects. This letting go is an important part of the spiritual path as expressed in the second factor of the noble eightfold path, *sammā-saṅkappa*, "right intention". Right intention includes the intention of renunciation, *nekkhamma-saṅkappa*, which primarily concerns the world of the five senses.¹⁹ It is on the spiritual path, then, that we find the true solution to conflict.

This renunciation, however, is a matter of personal choice and cannot be applied to society as a whole. In other words, there is no obvious way in which to get an entire population to give up its attachment to the sense world. This echoes our findings above, where we examined the Sakkapañha Sutta. The solution to conflict is found at the individual level, which is where attachment to the objects of the five senses can either be reduced or given up.

We conclude that conflict is a given in our societies. It may be possible to reduce it through wise policies and good leadership, but never to eliminate it. At the individual level, however, we have discovered two strategies for overcoming conflict: (1) reducing or giving up the sense of self; and (2) reducing or eliminating our attachments to the five-sense world.

¹⁸ This view is supported by modern views of conflict, such as those given by the conflict-resolution organisation Interact Community Dispute Resolution Service (ICDRS). According to them, one of the causes of conflict is "conflict of interest", which is similar to what is described in the simile at MN 54.

¹⁹ See for instance SN 45.8, <https://suttacentral.net/sn45.8/en/sujato>. The word *nekkhamma* is the opposite of *kāma* and thus a renunciation of the five-sense world.

What is important for this essay, however, is that the individual achievement of peace does not just benefit the individual, but also the wider society. Let us now look at how this may happen in practice.

IV. HOW TO AVOID CONFLICT

To gain a better understanding of how we can avoid conflict, let us extend the simile of the birds and the piece of meat. We need to consider what it means to let go of the meat and how this comes about. To be able to give up the meat, that is, to renounce the five-sense world, a person needs to find meaning and satisfaction apart from the five senses. This happens through the general practice of Buddhist principles, but more specifically through meditation. This is what the Buddha says in the famous Mahāparinibbāna Sutta:

Soon after the Buddha had recovered from that sickness, he came out from his dwelling and sat in the shade of the porch on the seat spread out. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, it’s fantastic that the Buddha is comfortable and well. Because when the Buddha was sick, my body felt like it was dragged. I was disorientated, and the teachings weren’t clear to me.” ...

“I’m now old, elderly and senior. I’m advanced in years and have reached the final stage of life. I’m currently eighty years old. Just as a decrepit cart keeps going by relying on straps, in the same way, the Realized One’s body keeps going by relying on straps, or so you’d think. Sometimes the Realized One, not focusing on any signs, and with the cessation of certain feelings, enters and remains in the signless *samādhi*. Only then does the Realized One’s body become more comfortable.

So Ānanda, be your island, your refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does a mendicant do this? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body – keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. That’s how a mendicant is their island, their refuge, with no other refuge. That’s how the teaching is their island and their refuge, with no other refuge.

Whether now or after I have passed, any who shall live as their island, their refuge, with no other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge – those mendicants of mine who want to train shall be among the best of the best.²⁰

Here we find Ven. Ānanda distraught because of the Buddha’s sickness. It is now clear to him that the Buddha is nearing the end of his life.

²⁰ “The Great Discourse on the Buddha’s Extinguishment”, DN 16, <https://suttacentral.net/dn16/en/sujato#2.24.3>.

The physical presence of the Buddha here represents the five-sense world. Just as the Buddha is impermanent, so is everything in the five-sense world. We grasp and attach to things, but before we know it, we are forced by the nature of impermanence to give them up. So much suffering in life is caused in this way. Unfortunately, too often our response to the pain is conflict and violence. The good news is that a deep sense of fulfilment can be found apart from the five senses. How does this come about?

As the Buddha himself makes clear later on in the same *sutta*, his teachings will still be available, even after his death.²¹ What Ānanda is grieving is the loss of the Buddha's physical presence, that is, his presence to the five senses, not the loss of the *ideas* that the Buddha proclaimed to the world. Yet it is these latter things, the Dhamma, that truly defines the Buddha.

The Buddha's response to Ānanda shows us how to become independent of the five senses. Instead of taking refuge in the five-sense realm, one should be an "island" by taking refuge in the Dhamma and oneself. This is done, explains the Buddha, by practicing the four applications of mindfulness, the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. This, of course, is all about meditation practice, the seventh factor of the noble eightfold path, eventually leading to *samādhī*, deep states of bliss and peace.

When one meditates as prescribed in the *suttas*, one develops qualities that engender this independence. Two such qualities are *pīti* and *passaddhī*, joy and tranquillity.²² The joy ensures that meditation is a more interesting experience than any happiness derived from the five senses. The tranquillity is a result of desires dying down and the meditation experience being self-sufficient. One has reached an inner refuge, taking oneself and the Dhamma as a refuge, where one is independent of the world outside, that is, the world of the senses.²³

This inner refuge depends on a comprehensive development of the noble eightfold path. As the meditation deepens as described above, especially when it reaches the deep stillness of the mind known as *samādhī*, one understands this intuitively. One can see the important relationship between one's inner refuge on the one hand and moral conduct and harmony with the external world on the other. The result of this insight is that one becomes a more generous, kind, and compassionate person, whose desire is to live in harmony with the world at large. In this way, any person who practices the Buddhist path

²¹ "The teaching and training that I have taught and pointed out for you shall be your Teacher after my passing." At <https://suttacentral.net/dn16/en/sujato#6.1.5>.

²² These qualities are found with a high frequency in the *suttas*, including in important doctrinal contexts such as the seven factors of awakening (e.g. SN 46.1, <https://suttacentral.net/sn46.1/en/sujato>), dependent liberation (e.g. AN 10.1, <https://suttacentral.net/an10.1/en/sujato>), mindfulness of breathing (e.g. MN 118, <https://suttacentral.net/mn118/en/sujato#19.1>), and more.

²³ When the Buddha says one should take oneself as a refuge, he obviously does not refer to taking refuge in a soul or some other permanent essence. The point, it seems, is merely that one should be independent of the world, especially other people.

fully will promote social unity and contribute, in small or large ways, to a more peaceful and inclusive world.

V. HOW INDIVIDUALS CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE

The above may seem hopelessly idealistic. World peace must surely be negotiated at a grand scale, and individual contributions will mostly be at the margins. This may indeed be a common attitude, but history does suggest that individuals can make a significant difference.

The foremost example of an individual contributing to world peace is the Buddha himself. Over the past 2,500 years, whenever peace has been achieved through the application of Buddhist principles, the Buddha himself must be given a large part of the credit. Without him, there would be no such principles to apply.

But the Buddha has not just been indirectly involved in creating peace. A classic example of the Buddha's direct intervention in a potential war is found in the *Kunala Jātaka*.²⁴ In this charming story, two neighbouring nations, the Sakyas and the Koliyas, respectively the Buddha's extended clan on his father's and his mother's side, are about to go to war over the scarce water in the Rohini river. The Buddha arrives just as hostilities are about to break out and asks them whether human life or water is more precious. They get the message and war is averted.

Another classic example are the events found in *Kosambaka Khandhaka* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the Monastic Law.²⁵ Here we find two different factions of the monastic community, the Sangha, arguing over a minor matter of monastic protocol. The dispute escalates to the point where some of the monks decide to expel a monk on the other side of the argument, thus making a key move in a process that can lead to schism in the Sangha, which according to the Monastic Law is a very serious matter.²⁶ The Buddha tries to reconcile them, but to no avail. He then sets out wandering, leaving the monks to sort out their problem on their own. When they realise the Buddha has left, they quickly come to their senses and ask for forgiveness. The Sangha then does the appropriate procedures to reestablish unity. The Buddha's intervention is indirect, yet effective.

There are several further examples where the Buddha turns conflict or potential conflict into something positive,²⁷ but this should be enough to make

²⁴ *Ja* 536, <https://suttacentral.net/ja536/en/francis>.

²⁵ *Kd* 10 at <https://suttacentral.net/pli-tv-kd10/en/brahmali>. This story is also found in a slightly different form in the *Upakkilesa Sutta*, MN 128, <https://suttacentral.net/mn128/en/sujato#2.1>. Moreover, it forms the backdrop to MN 48, the *Kosambiya Sutta*, <https://suttacentral.net/mn48/en/sujato#2.1>. Given all these references, it would seem this event had a significant, perhaps traumatic, impact on the early Sangha.

²⁶ See *Kd* 17 at <https://suttacentral.net/pli-tv-kd17/en/brahmali#3.16.12>.

²⁷ There are many *suttas* where the Buddha is portrayed in this way. Here are some obvious examples: *Akkosa Sutta*, "The Abuser", SN 7.2, <https://suttacentral.net/sn7.2/en/sujato>; *Asurindaka Sutta*, "With Bhāradvāja the Fiend", SN 7.3, <https://suttacentral.net/sn7.3/>

the case.

Yet individual contributions to peace in society are not limited to those of the Buddha. Another prominent example is the conversion of emperor Ashoka and his consequent embrace of non-violence. Before he adopted Buddhism, Ashoka had become notorious for his brutal conquest of Kalinga, a smaller kingdom to the east of Magadha, Ashoka's empire. Once he had converted to Buddhism, he expressed his deep remorse for his actions and changed his ways fundamentally. Here are Ashoka's own words as recorded in the famous Ashokan edicts:

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, conquered the Kalingas eight years after his coronation. One hundred and fifty thousand were deported, one hundred thousand were killed ... Now Beloved-of-the-Gods feels deep remorse for having conquered the Kalingas.²⁸

Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus: It is now more than two and a half years since I became a lay-disciple (*upāsaka*), but until now I have not been very zealous. But now that I have visited the Sangha for more than a year, I have become very zealous.²⁹

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: Dhamma is good, but what constitutes Dhamma? (It includes) little evil, much good, kindness, generosity, truthfulness, and purity. ... I have given various things including the gift of life. And many other good deeds have been done by me.³⁰

This picture of Buddhist leadership pertains also in the present day.³¹ We still have a variety of Buddhist leaders around the world who rely on Buddhist principles, to a greater or lesser degree, to guide government policy. The impact of Buddhism is evident both in how political bodies work and in the formulation of actual policies. In the former category we have the Thai Supreme Sangha Council and the Sri Lankan Mahanayaka Theros, both of which groups are close to political power. An example of the latter is the Cambodian government's use of the Buddhist principle of non-harm to teach parents not to physically punish their children.³²

It is clear, then, that leaders acting from Buddhist ideals can have a

en/sujato; Bilāṅgika Sutta, "With Bhāradvāja the Bitter", SN 7.4, <https://suttacentral.net/sn7.4/en/sujato>; Kasibhāradvāja Sutta, and "With Bhāradvāja the Farmer", SN 7.11, <https://suttacentral.net/sn7.11/en/sujato>.

²⁸ Rock edict 13. Translation by Ven. S. Dhammika (1993). The next two quotes are from the same translator.

²⁹ Minor rock edict 1.

³⁰ Pillar Edict 2.

³¹ Matthew J. Moore (11 January 2018) says that "even today many nations in Asia understand their governments to have a duty to rule in a way that is consistent with Buddhist values."

³² Lauren Day (16 October 2024).

positive effect on the world, turning it away from conflict and towards greater peace and unity. Yet such positive effects are not limited to what our leaders do. Every one of us can contribute to peace in society through our conduct. As we turn towards Buddhist values, even simple ones like generosity and kindness, we start to create that inner refuge of joy and tranquillity that allows us greater independence from the world outside. This allows us to interact more harmoniously with our fellow human beings and society at large. We become net contributors to peace in the world.

The deeper we take our Buddhist practice, the greater will be this contribution. If, based on the qualities of good conduct, we develop our minds in meditation, we eventually reach an inner refuge that corresponds to a complete detachment from the external world. It is at this point that our relationship to the world is fundamentally transformed. We begin actively to seek harmony and peace in our dealings with society, thereby affecting the lives of almost everyone we meet. People are inspired by our example, and many will try to emulate our attitude. There is an instinctive understanding that this is the right way to live. Goodness begets goodness.

Yet it is the deepest levels of Buddhist practice that are truly transformative. When deep meditation is supplemented by deep insight, when we free ourselves from the shackles of the five-sense world and the sense of self, it is only then that we gain a full understanding of the true causes of societal disharmony and conflict. Not only are we inspiring examples through our exemplary conduct, but we become powerful teachers and counsellors who can show the way to unity and inclusivity to anyone willing to listen, of which there will be many. We are now a true force for peace in our society.

VI. CONCLUSION

Buddhist doctrine is clear that there is no such thing as a peaceful human society without conflict or violence. Buddhism does not believe in utopias. At best peace can be maximised through wise policies and good leadership. Buddhism is well placed to help formulate such policies and give advice on good leadership. Such advice is especially powerful when dispensed by individuals, whether monastic or lay, who live with integrity, having successfully applied the Buddhist principles of good conduct in their own lives.

Yet the role of individuals in promoting peaceful societies does not stop at direct political influence. By developing our minds, by creating peace and harmony in our individual lives, every person, whether Buddhist or not, has the opportunity to become an island of peace and non-conflict within broader society. To some extent this can be achieved through generosity, kindness, and compassion, but the full potential can only be reached through meditation and the consequent arising of wisdom.

The power of such individual examples is not to be underestimated. Just as a stone dropped in water causes ripples in all directions, so does the impact of individual peace and harmony spread through society, in the process touching the lives of many people. Depending on the qualities and the connections of

the individual concerned, this rippling effect may even be felt at high levels of power and government.

Every little step we each take on the noble eightfold path will help engender peace in our societies. When we attain the deepest states of peace and insight, the impact will be especially powerful. The effect may be hard to measure, but we can be confident it is there.

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BUILDING INNER PEACE WHILE MANAGING HUMAN EMOTIONS FROM A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The study examines emotional management through Buddhist philosophy, contrasting it with Western psychological theories. While Western frameworks often emphasize cognitive and neurological perspectives, Buddhism provides a holistic and ethical view, recognizing emotions as transient and deeply tied to suffering (*dukkha*) and liberation. It argues that emotions arise from karmic patterns, mental formations, and attachments rather than being purely spontaneous responses.

Buddhist teachings classify emotions into afflictive states (*kilesa*), such as anger and craving, which perpetuate suffering, and wholesome states, like compassion (*karuṇā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*), which foster inner peace and wisdom. Through classical Buddhist scriptures, including the Abhidhamma and Mahāyāna texts, the study explores emotional regulation as a spiritual practice.

Two key approaches to emotional management are examined: reaction-focused strategies, which involve mindfulness-based interventions to prevent emotional escalation, and trait-focused strategies, which cultivate virtuous qualities through meditation (*bhāvanā*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). Techniques such as mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*), and cognitive reframing (*sammā-ditṭhi*) help regulate emotions while reshaping moral disposition.

Unlike conventional psychology, Buddhist emotional management aims beyond well-being, seeking liberation (*moksha*) from suffering. By bridging Buddhist and contemporary psychological insights, the study presents a transformative model of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and spiritual awakening.

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Keywords: *Emotional management, kilesa, bhāvanā, satipaṭṭhāna, moksha.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern society, peace and harmony are widely discussed due to the increasing complexity of human interactions and the conflicts that arise from them. Within the Buddhist tradition, peace is often understood as a state of equanimity in both mind and emotions. As such, emotional management plays a crucial role in the discourse on peace-building from a Buddhist perspective. Emotions, as studied extensively in the field of psychology, are complex and multifaceted, deeply intertwined with human cognition and behavior. The internal workings of the mind are intricate, making it challenging to comprehend the nature of emotions fully, particularly those that disrupt inner peace. In Buddhist analysis, emotions are not merely psychological phenomena but are also karmic-ally conditioned experiences that influence one's spiritual path. Understanding their nature and mastering their regulation are essential to cultivating a balanced and harmonious mind. This study explores the Buddhist perspective on emotions, focusing on how Buddhist teachings provide methods for emotional management, ultimately fostering inner peace. Central to this exploration is the role of Buddhist semantics, which elucidate the relationship between emotions and mental states through fundamental *Suttas* (discourses). These scriptural teachings offer profound insights into the nature of affective emotions and prescribe practical methods for their transformation. By comparing both Western psychological theories and Buddhist thought, this essay examines the process of developing a calm and purified mind – one that responds to the external world with composure and kindness. The primary emphasis is on understanding emotions and mastering the techniques to manage them effectively, thereby promoting both individual well-being and collective harmony.

II. DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION OF EMOTION

The rising and falling tenses of the mind are called emotions¹ The introductory word “emotion” is used for the tension of the mind. The root of this word emotion substratum is the French “*émouvoir*”². (1) Emotion is a certain state of confusion or tumult of the mind. (2) Emotion is a response of the mind without constituting and sudden stimulus. (3) Emotion is an emergence of the simulated condition of mental unbalance according to his detachments and attachments. (4) Emotion is having consternation in the mind and losing the mind's balance.³ Emotions are the most complicated experiences. The emotions beget through several experiences created with the help of physical experience and an idea of the mind. The emotions come out correlating to the ideas. The continuous pertaining is decided by an idea. So, utilizing this life is the root of all the conditions of emotions. It is the experience of emotions.

¹ Bauddha Mano Vidyawa, p. 88.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emotion>

³ Emotion and Psychology (year?), p. 1.

According to psychiatrist Halst, when impressing the expresses, the emotions are bound with them after integrating the water of Misur with other streams of water. It flows to the ocean as a huge stream, but it is identified by another name. The experience that begets sensation can be equalized at the water of Musoor. The group of illustrative intentions, just like the water before coming across the river Mississippi emotion equals river Mississippi which passed that junction. Here in the experiencing bounds with the expresses of illustrations, the shears of emotion should not be as deep or wide as before.⁴

There are many theories combined with emotion in modern psychology.⁵

James Lange theory: According to this theory, emotion is created with the physical reactions, and this happens according to certain stimuli.

(2) Canon Brand Theory: Their teachings state that the thalamus and hypothalamus in the small brain create emotion. When a certain stimulus enters into the thalamus and hypothalamus, it will be connected to an external organ and corresponding physical reactions. (3) Cognitive theory: Their attitude says that the physical stimulus combined with cognition will create emotion. (4) Activation Theory: This theory says that creating an illuminating occasion will originate the emotion.

When dealing with emotion they are categorized by the psychiatrist. As instinct emotion, social emotion, religious emotion, aesthetic emotion, and intellectual emotion. The theory of psychoanalysis clarifies the emotion that generates the unconscious impulses in the subconscious mind of a person while getting an intention of an organ; the defilements in the subconscious will be operative. Even then, there is no space in the society to operate those defilements as they are. Then, there will be an interconflict between the defilements and the social acceptance. As a result of that conflict, the person obtains the experience of that emotion.⁶

The characteristics of a person will be anxious because of emotion. Not only tension but also declaring the quality of it and the reaction will have occurred. An anxious demeanour is generated because of emotion. The ways of behaviors can be incomplete, rapid, or irregularly occurring without a settled process of actions. According to the situation, the stimulation of those various kinds of emotions is denoted as tears, anger, happiness, etc.⁷ The internal reaction is another important matter which is generating emotions. The instance is the different procedures of glands of each conductor. As well as the improvement of neurology there presented an analysis of cent ring emotion with the brain and nerves after grabbing an intention from an organ, it will communicate to the brain. Then the analysis occurred, centering the system of nerves and brain after capturing an intention to an organ of ours where the nerves communicate through the brain. According to the nature of

⁴ Your mind and how to use it (Sinhala translation- Minis Manase Mahimaya.)

⁵ "Chittha wega" Niwan Maga – Chittha Vibhaga Ankaya, p. 53

⁶ Theories in Contemporary psychology, p. 443.

⁷ Cittavega ha manovidhyava, p.1.

the organic aim, the brain communicates it to the central system of the brain, and this system communicates directly to the new central system. Then the brain sends various signals to the central procedure of nerves. If a certain aim or incident is consternating, the following nerve of the motor nerve activates, and through that, more blood will circulate to the psycho muscle. Thus, various glands will issue various hormones. Then various physical differences will gain more strength to the body. According to neurology, this process is experienced as an emotion.⁸

Kanen and Philip's theory declares an opinion equal to this opinion. They declare that after getting an intention of organic aim in cognitive theory accordingly they generate emotions. Fear, sorrow, and shame are introduced as minus emotions by modern psychiatrists and happiness, pleasure, and enthusiasm as enthusiastic emotions.⁹ When such emotion induces certain behaviors of a person internally and externally, it's dealing as an inductance. Many psychiatrists believe that there is an interaction between inductance and emotions. Western psychiatrists have used the word emotion to clarify the state of preliminary activation of the mind. According to Gilbert Russell, the term emotion has been used for introducing the various states of mind such as the wish, the inductance, the commotion, the mentality, and the experience.¹⁰ Anyhow, the emotion can be denoted as the certain movability of the mind or certain condition of trembling of the mind.

III. THE BUDDHIST ANALYSIS OF EMOTION

Ven. Prof. Uduhavera Ananda Thero says that Western psychology has used emotion to clarify the aggression of the mind. But such kind of technical words cannot be disclosed in Buddhism.¹¹ The denoting words and terms used in the English language are not used directly in Buddhism. But Ven. U Ananda, the close word for his unstable mind is '*vedanā*'.¹² That can be used with morality and with the means of evaluation. Ven. Vidurapola Piyadassi Thero, giving semantics for the word emotion, equalizes four Pāli words.¹³

As follow *bhāvo*, *ubbego*, *cittakkobo*, *raso*. According to the Buddhist analysis of emotions, they are generated by gravitating to external things as a way of attraction and as repulsive.¹⁴ The general tension of a person is tense for attractive things and refusal of disliked things. The person elaborates on this process because of internal mental judging. The Buddhist analysis of generating emotion is the cognition way or the way of identifying. They will

⁸ *Bauddha Mano Vidyawa*, p. 108.

⁹ '*Chittha Vega*' Niwan Maga – *Chittha Vibhaga Ankaya*, p. 52.

¹⁰ '*Chittha Vega Kalamanakaranaya Pilibanda Bauddha Vighaya*' *Abhaya Prasadini* – Oliver Abenayaka Upahara Granthaya, p. 260,

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 259.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 260.

¹³ *Chittha vega Palanaya Pilibanda Budu Dhame Iganweema – Vevellala Amurudha Nahimi Abhinandana Sastriya Sangrahaya*, p. 183.

¹⁴ The Psychology of Emotion in Buddhist Perspective, P. 3.

directly influence that. In the middle-length sayings (*Majjhima Nikāya*), of its *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, it is told that when we identify the external world as ‘*saṁjānāti*’ (recognize as its vision), sensing cognition gives a result as ‘*abhinandati*’ (wished consent or desired about). Then, if the sense cognition has identified as ‘*abhijānāti*’ (recognized the reality), it is reacted as ‘*nābhinantati*’, which ceases going to emotional reactions,¹⁵ the cognitive task proceeding to the emotional reactions, and that is the acceptance of Buddhist analysis.

There is a fine analysis of the generation of emotion in *Madupīṇḍika Sutta*. Namely, getting together the eye and its form generates eye-consciousness. The connecting of these three occurs the touching or contacting. In the case of contact, it will be experiencing, and if a certain objective is experienced, it recognizes the signal. If a certain objective identifies the same objective, argues the same objective, and defines it as greed dogma. Belief (sight or vision) and make hindrances. This hindrance makes the person surrender.¹⁶ This Sutra clarifies vividly the activation of the interior mentality of a person and also analyzes well the emotion that originates in the mind of a person. Thus, by orienting it to an organ, the concept of experience is endowed, and being endowed with this concept, the emotion will be activated. As a result of this Buddhist analysis, physio-gnomic factors are needed for the emotional experience.

The modern psychiatrist Power Fanner defines the Buddhist theory of generating emotion as a theory of cognition and the Buddhist analysis of emotion cannot be deficient only for the analysis of cognition because for generating emotions, other factors are also influencing. That is clarified through the above analysis. We also have to agree with Ananda Thero that the very close word for emotion in Buddhism is experiencing (*vedanā*). The western psychologies divide emotion as plus and minus. But according to the above *Sutta*, Buddhism has gone very far from the West and expresses “*adukkhamasukhā vedanā*” (a feeling which is neither painful nor joyful) and has added a separate section for emotion. The positive emotions that we can find in Western psychology are defined by Buddhism as ‘*sarāmisa sukhā vedanā*’ and ‘*nirāmisa sukhā vedanā*’. So, it has connected not only to the mundane but also to the super-mundane. So, being minus emotion is also connected to both mundane and super-mundane.¹⁷

Buddhism clarifies the origin of emotion under three stages: *Anusaya* or the occasion of sleeping defilements in the mind. *Pariyuṭṭhāna* or occasion of rooting in the mind and generating *Vitikkama* or occasion of operation physically or orally. This is very similar to the Western psychological theory of the three-fold mental analysis. The specific way of analyzing emotion in Buddhism is analyzing it practically and with morality. According to the Buddhist analysis, some emotions cause the cleaving with greed as well as

¹⁵ MN 1.

¹⁶ MN 1.

¹⁷ A. IV. 204

dissipate and mitigate the greed. Some emotions cause for making merry and pleasure; some other emotions cause for constituting unhappiness and woe. Likewise, some emotions cause retrogression, dissatisfaction, and evil in a person. So, under this base, it is clear that some emotions should be progressed (*kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ bhāvanāya*), and some emotions should be curbed and controlled. (*akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya*) So, it is very obvious that Buddhism clarified emotion with specificity.

The recommended process of Buddhism for the emotion and the management of emotions an additional word 'Dhamma' is used for denoting experiencing in Buddhism.¹⁸ Here 'Dhamma' was used to denote emotion. There in 'Dhamma' was used to analyze the condition of mentality with the attribution of morals and values together with wholesome and unwholesome. Greedlessness, hate, and non-delusion are categorized as unwholesome emotions. Greed, hatred, and delusion are categorized as wholesome emotions. Positive emotion and negative emotion in Western psychology are equalized to the categorization of Buddhist psychology. Positive emotion or wholesome emotion enhancement and negative emotion or unwholesome emotion reduction are the stability of Buddhism. Buddhism discusses emotion, especially giving a prominent place to morals or civilization, whereas, there are many more emotions presented in Buddhism that induce a person for unwholesome.

IV. THE UNWHOLESOME EMOTION

(1) The root of unwholesome: Greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*). (2) Cankers (*āsava*)¹⁹: Canker of sense desire (*kāmāsava*), canker of existence (*bhavāsava*), canker of views (*diṭṭhāsava*), canker of ignorance (*avijjāsava*). The cankers are endowed with external enthusiasm (motivation) or inducement. (3) Underlying tendency or proclivities (*Anusaya*):²⁰ Sensuous greed (*kāmarāgānusaya*), grudge (*paṭighanusaya*), speculative opinion (*diṭṭhānusaya*), skeptical doubt (*vicikicchānusaya*), conceit (*mānānusaya*), craving for continued existence (*bhavarāgānusaya*), ignorance (*avijjānusaya*). These proclivities are sunk in the mind of a person, and they are likewise sleeping in the mind of a person. (4) Differentiation (*papañca*): The differentiation originates through our sense of cognition, and it is the deepest position of a person. Finally, it will be able to convert the person into his slave, and the commentary explains there are three differentiations: greed, conceit, and view.²¹ (5) Defilements (*upakkilesa*): There are moral impurities of mind as pointed out in *Vattūpama Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*. The *Sutta* similes the mind to a purified cloth and just as the cloth is dirty from the dust, the mind also will be impure due to the defilements. According to the *Sutta*

¹⁸ 'Citta Vega Kalamanakaranaya Pilibanda Baudha Vighaya' Abaya Prasadini – Oliver Abenayaka Upahara Satriya Granthaya, p. 261

¹⁹ SN 1. 38.

²⁰ DN 3

²¹ *Papañcasūdanī* 2, p. 61.

it had are sixteen types of defilements as unrighteous greed,²² ill will, anger, hostility, etc. (6) Five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*): These five hindrances penetrate the person for the malevolence characteristics of defilement. They are five very powerful emotional occasions such as: Sensuous desire (*kāmachanda*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thinamiddha*), restlessness and scruples (*uddhaccakukkucca*), and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).²³ (7) Fetters (*saṃyojana*): Under these fetters, ten defilements are dragging the person with emotional inductances and fettered to the existence of the soul or the motion world: Personality-belief (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), clinging to mere rules and rituals (*sīlabbataparāmasa*), sensuous craving (*kāmaraga*), ill-will (*byāpāda*), craving for the fine-matter existence (*rūparaga*), craving for the immaterial existence (*arūparaga*), conceit (*māna*), ignorance (*avijjā*). (8) The four wrong paths (*agati*): Path of greed (*chanda*), path of hate (*dosa*), path of delusion (*moha*), and path of cowardice (*bhaya*)²⁴

According the Buddhist teachings, a person can get rid of his sorrowful sufferings by getting use of the necessary characteristic changes. The self-understanding will have resulted in be change in his emotional characteristics and emotional inductance. This transformation is denoted as the liberation of knowledge (*paññāvimutti*) and the liberty of volition (*cetovimuti*). The first condition of liberation is based on understanding. The second is the change of a person's emotional personality.²⁵ The Buddhist analysis is targeted at demolishing intolerance generated by negative emotion and enhancing positive emotion. There are many applicable teachings in *Suttas* for demolishing negative emotions.

There are two replications (re-responses) generally which are identified as negative emotions or defilements:²⁶ Being let to eject the emotions, being allowed to submerge emotion artificially. The above two methods are not accepted as successive reactions. The negative emotion or the emotion of defilement should not be proclaimed society without control. If so, there will be conflicts in social life. On the other hand, pressing emotions will be given intervening bad results for the person himself as well as the society. Therefore, we should have a clear and vivid understanding of the successive management of emotion in dual occasions. The previous awareness of negative emotions and avoiding them in the very beginning. The awareness of demolishing negative emotions after their origin. – Remedial Method. The first category of acclivities is the ways of restraining or exterminating that defiled emotion, and the second category pertains to remedies. Modern psychology has defined them as the monitoring of pre-emption and the monitoring of reactions, called antecedent-focused emotion

²² MN 1

²³ SN 5. 228.

²⁴ DN 3

²⁵ 'Citta Vega Kalamanakaranaya Pilibanda Bauddha vigrahaya' Abayaprasadini- Oliver Abenayaka, Upahara Sastriya Granthaya, p. 260.

²⁶ Bauddha Mano Vidyawa, p. 116.

and response-focused emotion regulation.²⁷ Both methodologies are included in the Buddhist literature for the management of emotion.

V. EMOTION MANAGEMENT FOR INNER PEACE

5.1. The response-focused emotion regulation

The *Vitakkasanthāna Sutta*²⁸ has forwarded a methodology of managing an emotion, and it is a control after an emotion. So, it can denote a remedial method. There are five methodologies of how to get rid of defiled emotions caused by rebellious emotions.

Aññanimitta pabba: It is causing any object and giving birth to misery, anger, or ignorance that object can be controlled by reminding another opposing action. It is just like a carpenter or his helper removing a big nail using a small nail²⁹. If one defiled emotion appears just then, we must remind virtuous emotions the get rid of the defiled emotion. (2) *Adīnananimitta pabba*: After pouring water to fire, it will en-kindle and react again. So, its defiled emotion begins again and then has to remind its nature of sorrow and the nature of its defilement. The common feature of defilement is that it causes harm to the society or the person. So, if we hang a dead body around the neck of a beautifully dressed damsel or virile young person, then she or he ought to be ashamed of himself or herself. It is repugnant. Likewise, we have to control defile emotions realizing their effects. (3) *Asatīmanasikāra*: If defiled emotions emerge furthermore that object must forget or mustn't remind or think.³⁰ The commentaries state this: "the defiled argument should not reminiscent should not remember. If a person hates a picture, he will close his eyes, likewise, the argument begot in the mind should vanish. Even then, if the defiled object emerges, just remember Dhamma and fiction and recite them loudly."³¹ So they must be lessened. So, by lessening by and by, that mental attention of the defiled emotion will less develop. (4) *Vitakkamūlabheda pabba*: If emerging again the defiled emotion, it should sharply analyze the root of the cause. That observance will help identify the simple and complicated influence of the defiled emotion. This cognitive analysis can omit the defiled emotion gradually. It is the same as a swiftly walking person just thinking why I should walk rapidly and slow down his speed. Likewise, he will think sleeping is better and he sleeps. He stands still and sits down. In this way, he goes from a hard posture to an easy posture. Likewise, being away from the reminiscence of defiled emotion is the critical thought of part of a section of variety or *vitakkamūlabheda pabba*. (5) *Abhiniggahāṇa pabba*:

²⁷ "Anticended& Response Focused Emotion Regulation" *Journal of personality and Social Psychology*, p. 281 - 291.

²⁸ MN 1.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ MN 1.

³¹ Ud 7.7.

If the defiled emotion is not controlled by the above four ways, then the defiled emotion. Then must press the upper palate with the tongue and tighten the teeth hard, and in that way, the object of defilement must be suffered well by the mind. As a virile, strong person being aggressed, attacked, and dissolute, the feeble person's defiled mind must be attacked and dissolute by the meritorious mind. On the other hand, if a person is unable to control the defilements, it means the strength of the defilements as well as the courage of the person. On such occasions, the person should apply or make use of personal courage and self-courage, and Buddhism emphasizes it as the compulsory power for the spiritual enhancement of the individual.

All of these methodologies must operate after the emotion occurs. So this is denoted as the monitoring method or devices of remedies. The suppression of emotion will have happened fundamentally through this. However, the modern psychiatrist emphasizes that this is not a successive method of controlling defiled emotions. James Gross says that submerging emotion will be helpful to prevent the proclaiming of characteristic emotion but the internal emotion experiences are unchanged.³²

5.2. The antecedent focused on emotional regulation

The *Sabbāsava Sutta*,³³ which has presented methodology, seems to be a method of restraint or extermination. Here, the defiled emotion of the mind is prevented before they are enhanced, and regenerative comprehension is very important because seven methods can be followed under this.

(1) *Dassanā pahātabbā*: The various visions implemented in the mind of man influence directly and straightly the origin of emotions. The person about himself and his experiencing world implements various visions. This happened through the Dhamma, which should be remembered and the Dhamma, which should be forgotten or non-reminisce. Further, this happens because of the misunderstanding of Dhamma and constructing Dhamma self-orientally and self-depending, and building attitudes according to the time. The person with his vision or view creates eternal comfort and the soul of deterministic soulfulness concepts, but being getting away from them and concentrating on their impermanency transformation or changing the action of its reactions with this vision, he can demolish the defiled emotions. (2) *Samvarā pahātabbā*: Conflicting with organic objectives will give birth to emotions. It is necessary to observe them with wisdom and not allow operating them. They must be controlled, and that controlling is called restraining. The objectives that are caught by the organs must be concentrated with reminiscence and must get rid of attaching and conflicting with the mind of disregarding, and this is called the organic restraint. The policy of this preliminary

³² Emotion regulation: *Affective Cognitive and Social consequences in psycho physiology*, p. 281 – 291.

³³ MN 1.

feature is to identify the defilements at the very beginning and control them. (3) *Paṭisevanā pahātabbā*: The necessities such as foodstuff, shelter, clads, and medicines and their indulging way and objects of their usage should be retrospection and then can control the emotions. The Buddhist consuming way is without bound to it, without involving it, without wandering it, and without fulfilling personal requirements. This consuming vision will help mitigate emotions. This is the methodology of controlling emotion by consuming. (4) *Adhivāsana pahātabbā*: The various states or conditions that are to be faced during human life are out of his control. The condition of climate weather the natural body pains listening to rubbish from others and gaining mental pain are out of our administration. But with the comprehensive knowledge of them must be accepted and with patience to bear the emotions. (5) *Parivajjana Pahātabbā*: The serpents, dogs, cattle, horses, and elephants, as well as cesspools, thickets, and pits of muddy water, also create repugnance and consternated emotions. The sinful friends are also consternating the emotions. Here, avoidance means casting away those things by concentrating on wisdom is permitted for demolish the defiled emotions. (6) *Vinodanā pahātabbā*: Buddhism has paid attention to the internal mental factors that cause emotional consternation. The person reacts in the presence of his inherent in the condition of contradictions. These reactions are based on the wish of lust argument, the argument of anger based on malice, Innocence argument based on annoyance. The above-mentioned emotions constantly penetrating the mind should be prevented by without keeping them in the mind with nourishing and enriching when the emotion persisting into the mind, must avoid the reminiscence of them by giving cessation and cast away. This removal is called (*vinodana*) in meaning. This methodology is included in the right effect. (7) *Bhāvanā pahātabbā*: Meditation is the way of casting away the defiled qualities and enhancing the meritorious personal qualities. In *Sabbāsava Sutta*, it is said that by improving seven factors of enlightenment mindfulness, investigation of the law, energy, rapture, tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity, the wisdom will be uplifted. Then, defiled attributes and emotions will completely vanish.

Some have misunderstood the Buddhist analysis of emotion such an occasion is the controlling of emotion and management means the emptiness of them. The teachings of Buddhism on emotion are the minimizing of the defiled emotions or completely demolishing them. The imbibing of meritorious emotions instead of defiled emotions is the main aim of Buddhism. The Buddhism confirms to avoid with niggardliness, blemish or false and ignorance. They must be completely demolished. Buddhism confers to uplift kindness, delightfulness, and indifference. Personal activities, as well as the changes and differences of the environment, are caused by sinful or defiled emotions when the mind is attached to many carvings for other treasures that must be identified as the impurity of the condition of the mind and must be demolished. That means it is the most effective way the manage emotions. There

won't be rooted lust desire for the soul the intoxicant thought of happiness the intoxicant thought of the unknown. The vanishing way of fetters or intoxicant thought is the Noble Eightfold Path. The Lord Buddha in the first Dhamma discourse stresses to follow the middle path without going to the extremity.

The drowsing passion or proclivity of the mind anxiously for awaken. That can be awaiting controlled living with celibacy. The defining celibacy in commentary tales clarity to follow The Noble Eightfold Path up to the birth of Buddha, *paccekabuddha* (Partial Buddha) and the noble Aryans.³⁴ Departing from the nature of coitus and being with the noble truth. The noble purgative way squeezes the mentality of the impurities or defilements and creates a mentality of meritoriousness. The right thoughts rule the attitudes of mythology. Buddhism constantly has activated the tenability of causality for the controlling of emotions. The zenith of Buddhist management of emotion is the *nibbāna*. So, always it is facing *nibbāna*. Buddhism has used many derives and tactics for the management of emotion, and the expectation is the dual effect with them. Buddhist emotional management was implemented thousands of years ago, before the beginning of Western psychology. This is fitting to Western psychology sometimes it is far more away from modern psychology. That will be well clarified when dealing with Buddhist teachings. That will clear and identify through the above factors.

VI. CONCLUSION

Buddhist teachings emphasize emotional management as a fundamental practice for cultivating inner peace. Through systematic methods, emotions can be controlled, purified, and transformed, leading to a balanced and harmonious mind. Two primary approaches – response-focused regulation and antecedent-focused regulation – serve as the foundation for managing emotions effectively.

Response-focused regulation, as outlined in the *Vitakkasamṭhāna Sutta*, deals with emotions after they have arisen. This approach offers five methods: replacing negative emotions with virtuous thoughts, recognizing the harmful nature of emotions, avoiding recollection of defiled emotions, analyzing their root causes, and exerting willpower to suppress them. By consciously shifting one's mental focus, one can gradually weaken and ultimately eradicate defilements. However, modern psychology suggests that suppression alone does not alter internal experiences, indicating the need for a more comprehensive approach.

Antecedent-focused regulation, as described in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*, emphasizes preventing emotions before they arise. This method involves viewing reality through wisdom, practising restraint over sensory interactions, consuming mindfully, accepting external conditions with patience, avoiding negative influences, abandoning unwholesome mental states, and cultivating mindfulness through meditation. By addressing emotions at their root, this

³⁴ MN 116.

approach fosters long-term emotional stability and spiritual growth.

Buddhism does not advocate for emotional emptiness but rather for the purification of defiled emotions while nurturing positive qualities like compassion, joy, and equanimity. Emotional disturbances arise from attachment and craving, which can be overcome by practising the Noble Eightfold Path. Ultimately, emotional regulation in Buddhism leads to *nibbāna*, the cessation of suffering, offering a timeless and profound framework for achieving inner peace. These ancient methods, developed long before modern psychology, provide valuable insights into managing emotions and cultivating a serene, awakened mind.

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THE BUDDHIST PERCEPTION OF HEALTH FOR INNER PEACE

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Abstract:

Buddhism aims to create a person with sound spirituality and inner peace. Various training methods necessary for this purpose are taught in the *Dhamma*. Associating with good people (*sappurisasamsevā*), practicing the *Dhamma* (*Dhammānudhammapaṭipadā*), listening to the *Dhamma* (*saddhammassavana*), etc., are used for this achievement of the person. However, individuals who are not physically and mentally healthy are unlikely to reach this high state. Therefore, Buddhism pays great attention to the healthy existence of the person. Maintaining physical and mental health is an essential factor for him. Teachings on establishing and maintaining health are found in the *Vinaya Pitaka* as well as the *Sutta Pitaka*. The Buddhist ideology of health, patient and caregiver, classification of diseases, and hygiene practices are discussed in the study. In addition to the matters discussed so far, the focus of Buddhism on various personal hygiene habits such as brushing teeth, bathing, toilet use, and dietary habits can be brought out through *Vinaya* and *sutta* sermons are intended to be reviewed in this paper. Also, various strategies are prescribed in Buddhism to prevent accidents and snake bites. The target of this research paper is to carefully study the Buddha's teachings on how to protect personal health as a background for creating a person with the high spirituality expected from Buddhism.

Keywords: *Health, physical, psychological, peace, spiritual.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Being ill is a natural phenomenon. Everyone who lives must face sickness and death. But living as healthy as possible is one of the expectations of a person's life. Lord Buddha has implied that in the *Itthadhammasutta*, as health

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is desired by a person but rarely attainable.¹ Therefore, a person who wishes for excellent health but has lost health lives in constant misery. Those who are mentally intoxicated due to health, who claim that they have no diseases and that they are very healthy, do not see the reality of life and nature. The Buddha has pointed out in the *Sukhumālasutta* that some monks leave their robes because of the pride that arises from health after being ordained in the *Sāsana*.² Buddha preached that one day of living seeing the reality of life is better than living a hundred years without seeing the reality of life.

Observing the reality of life is not pessimism, according to Buddhism. Affected by the matters of birth, aging, and death, living beings constantly experience one or more of them. Buddhism looks for solutions to the question of whether the afflicted person can get rid of it forever. Therefore, Buddhism teaches to live with a mind that is necessary to face such situations. This preparation does not mean living without seeing treatment for ailments or ignoring diseases. No matter how many diseases there are, it is essential to understand the reality of life and face them more consciously. There is absolutely no blind faith in Buddhism, such as not treating diseases like in some other religious institutions. The only thing is to see the truth and not be shaken. A person will live till death suffering from many diseases, both physical and mental. Indeed, our body is subject to decay. (*parijñānamidamrūpaṃ*) It is a nest for diseases. (*Roganiddham*) is of a slight nature which perishes immediately. (*Pabhaṅguraṃ*) Endured a life that ended in death. (*Maraṇantaṃ hi Jīvitaṃ*) Buddhism is the result of the research to find a cure for such total suffering.³ Buddha, who was a teacher who guided to *Nibbana* (emancipation), was a doctor who taught health practices to stay healthy in life. There are many things contained in the Buddha's sermon about the diseases that come to us in the human world and the causes of those diseases, how to avoid those diseases, and the benefits of getting rid of diseases.

II. BUDDHIST DEFINITION OF HEALTH

There is hardly a Buddhist who has not read this famous Dhammapada stanza, “*ārogyaparamā lābhā*”. It is one place that emphasizes health. “*Ārogya*” means health. For this reason, health is often defined as the greatest profit. But according to *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, it is defined in a slightly different way:

“*ārogyaparamā lābhā - santuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanaṃ
vissāsaparamā ñāti - nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*”⁴

“*tattha ārogyaparamā lābhāti ārogabhavaparamā lābhā Vijjamānā pi Labhā
rogino alābhayewa. Tasmā arogassa sabbalābhā āgatāva honthi. tenethaṃ vuttaṃ
“ārogyaparamā lābhā”*”⁵

¹ *Āṅuttara Nikāya* (2012): 136.

² *Āṅuttara Nikāya* (2012): 240 - 241.

³ *Dhammapada* (2021): 22.

⁴ *Dhammapada*, (2021): 30.

⁵ *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā* (2006): 477.

“Earnings are based on health. Even the gains are losses for the sick person. Therefore, all the benefits are the same for a healthy person. Hence it was said *ārogyaparamā lābhā*.” - Health is used to take care of and develop such resources, such as fame, wealth, children, etc. Likewise, wealth, power, fame, etc., resources are not useful to the person who is not healthy.

In the *Pattakammasutta*, the Lord Buddha has pointed out that longevity is one of the factors that measure the success of a person's life. Because if a person is not blessed with health, it will hinder his welfare in this world and the hereafter.⁶ Health is also a result of growing compassion and meditation. Buddhism appreciates the bliss of non-hatred among all beings.⁷

The teaching mentioned above can be considered as a place where all kinds of health related to the person are brought together. Its original term, “*ārogyaparamā lābhā*”, refers to physical health. “*Santuṭṭiparamaṃ dhanam*” is about mental healing. Happiness is an outward indicator of a person's mental health. Here, the Buddha has preached about a cure from physical and mental illness. Apart from this, there are two other things that focus on the health of the person. That is social and spiritual health. A disorganized, distrustful society is unlivable and creates various social problems. Even living in such a society becomes uncomfortable. This is what is referred to as “*Patirūpadesavāsa*” in *Maṅgalasutta*.⁸ Just as a person who dwells in a suitable place is physically and mentally healthy, so the so-called faithful society helps him to move towards higher spiritual goals. “*Vissāsaparamā ñāti*” emphasizes social stability, and “*Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*” emphasizes spiritual stability.⁹

III. HEALTH: DEFINITION OF WHO

The World Health Organization offers a definition of health that is very similar to the Buddhist teaching on health that was outlined above. “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”¹⁰ – This is the explanation of the World Health Organization regarding health or well-being.

Here, it is explained that the aim of the World Health Organization is to provide a high standard of health for all. Accordingly, in the constitution of the World Health Organization, where health is defined, it has been pointed out that perfect physical, mental, and social hygiene is desired. Accordingly, *ārogya* represents physical health, *santuṭṭi* means mental health, and *vissāsa* means social health.

IV. CATEGORIZATION OF DISEASES IN BUDDHISM

There are various diseases that a person can contract. Their causes are

⁶ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 449.

⁷ *Suttanipāta* (2015): 26.

⁸ *Khuddakapāṭha* (2015): 3.

⁹ *Dhammapada* (2021): 30.

¹⁰ World Health Organization, accessed on (February 20, 2025), available at: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/major-themes/health-and-well-being>

various. The *Girimānandasutta* can be introduced as an important sutra that identifies and classifies the causes of such diseases and illnesses. As well as diseases, attention is paid to many things that society does not consider as diseases, but which are diseases.¹¹

This body is a source of much suffering and many disadvantages. Various disorders occur in this body. *cakkhurogo* (diseases of the eye) *sotarogo* (diseases of hearing) *ghāṇarogo* (diseases of the nose) *jivhārogo* (diseases of the tongue) *kāyarogo* (diseases of the body) *sīsarogo* (diseases of the head) *kaṇṇarogo* (diseases of the ear) *mukharogo* (diseases of the mouth) *dantarogo* (disease of teeth) *oṭṭharogo* (diseases of the lips) *kāso* (tuberculosis) *sāso* (snuffles) *pinaso* (catarrh) *daho* (some kind of fever) *Jaro* (fever) *kuccirogo* (diseases of the stomach) *mucchā* (coma) *pakkhandikā* (diarrhea) *sūla* (disease called sūla) *visūcikā* (Disease of Dysentery) *kuṭṭam* (leprosy) *gando* (abscess) *kilāso* (diseases called kilāsa) *soso* (diseases of breath) *apamāro* (epilepsy) *daddu* (ectomorph) *kaṇḍu* (eczema) *kacchu* (etch) *nakhasā* (disease of nail) *vitacchikā* (disease of *Vitacchikā*) *lohitapittam* (Hemophilia) *madhumeho* (diabetes) *ansā* (paralysis) *piḷakā* (cancer) *bhagandalā* (fistula). Here is a list of the diseases that can affect the body from head to toe. Almost all the internal and external diseases that were born physically have been included and presented in this discourse.

V. ROOTS OF DISEASES ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

Facts are given in *Girimānandasutta* about diseases based on bile, air, phlegm, etc. *pittasamuṭṭānā* (diseases caused by bile) *semhasamuṭṭānā* (diseases caused by phlegm) *vātasamuṭṭānā* (diseases caused by flatulence) *sannipātikā* (diseases caused by sarcoid – like fever sarcoid/ pneumonia) *utupariṇāmajā* (diseases caused by change of seasons) *visamaparihārajā* (diseases caused by wrong usage) *opakkamikā* (diseases caused by tricks) *kammavipākajā* (diseases caused by *kamma*). An introduction to the diseases is made, including the root causes of the diseases.¹²

Later, several pains, which are often not directly recognized as diseases but which afflict the body and could even lead to loss of life if not treated, have been included in the list of diseases and preached. *sītam* (cold) *uṇham* (hot) *jigacchā* (hunger) *pipāsā* (thirst) *uccāro* (tenesmus) *passāvo* (need to urinate) etc. Even though hunger is not recognized as a disease, the Buddha has pointed out that hunger is the most serious disease of all diseases (*jighacchā paramā rogā*).¹³ If one does not take food that is medicine for hunger, it does not cure itself like other diseases. “*Ekanāma kiṃ? Sabbe sattā āharaṭṭitika*” “What is one? “All the living beings exist by food.” It has been explained in *kumārāpaṇha* that the existence of all beings is based on food.¹⁴ Not only the food eaten here should be emphasized, but other psychoactive foods should also be taken into

¹¹ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2021): 1412 - 1413.

¹² *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 1413.

¹³ *Dhammapada* (2021): 30.

¹⁴ *Khuddakapāṭha* (2015): 2.

consideration. Moreover, the presence of urine, urine and stools are the causes of many diseases. When considering the causes of disease, attention should be drawn to an expression in the *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta*. It is pointed out and explained that eating meat causes diseases that did not exist before,

“*Tayo rogā pure āsum - icchā anasanaṃ jarā
pasūnaṃ ca samārabbhā - aṭṭanavtimāgamuṃ*”¹⁵

Here, it is said that in the past, man only had the diseases of high expectations (*icchā*), hunger/ lack of food (*anasanaṃ*), and old age (*jarā*), and ninety-eight diseases arose after he started eating animal flesh. Nowadays, it has been revealed that many diseases such as cancer, heart attacks, diseases caused by excess fat, obesity etc. are caused due to eating meat. Animal meat contains harmful elements that will cause a variety of adverse health effects. Also, modern doctors think that consumption of meat is harmful to individual health due to the chemical changes that occur based on fear, hatred, etc., in the killing of animals.¹⁶

Even disciplined relaxations in the subject of patients can be seen in *Theravāda Vinayapitaka*. If a sick person commits a grave misconduct, the punishment meted out to him will be relaxed.¹⁷ Even though he is a loser, the monk who is in distress due to some disease conditions has been freed. Even *Methunadhamma Pārājikā* is free of distress for mentally ill monks. For example, when a monk has full sexual intercourse with a woman, the monkhood is completely broken. He became a loser. But even if a monk who has reached the status of a madman falls into a *pārājikā* state, the Buddha has informed him that it is not a *pārājikā* state. This laxity of discipline only affects the mentally ill, not the fake mentally ill.¹⁸

There is a teaching called *Sekhiyā* in *Vinaya*. *Sekhiyās* are minor mistakes. They can also be considered bad habits. To protect the honor of the monk and the Dhamma, attention has been paid to minute matters in the *Vinaya*. But they were not considered as important in front of health problems,

“*Na chattapānissa agilānassa dhammaṃ desissāmiti sikkhā karaṇīyā*”.¹⁹

One who is not sick with an umbrella should not be preached. The Buddha allowed preaching of dhamma to a sick person even if he or she was holding an umbrella considering his illness. When a devotee sees a monk, if he is using an umbrella or a head covering, he removes them, thereby expressing his respect for the monk. But it is clear that more attention has been paid to the illness faced by the person than to the respect of *Dhamma*,

¹⁵ *Suttanipāta* (2015): 38.

¹⁶ Hidayat Aliouche, accessed on (Saturday 22 Feb 2025) available at: <https://www.news-medical.net/health/What-Are-the-Negative-Health-Effects-of-Eating-Meat.aspx>

¹⁷ *Pācittiyaṇṇa* (2012): 356.

¹⁸ *Suttavibhaṅga* (2014): 49.

¹⁹ *Suttavibhaṅga* (2012): 142.

*“Na daṇḍapāniṣṣa aḡilānassa dhammaṃ desissāmīti sikkhā karaṇīyā”.*²⁰

He who holds a stick in his hand and is not sick should not be preached to. But the Buddha advises the monks to preach the dhamma to those who are carrying a stick as a crutch due to their old age or illness,

*“Na upāhanārulhassa aḡilānassa dhammaṃ desissāmīti sikkhā karaṇīyā”.*²¹

The Lord Buddha advised not to preach to those who are not sick wearing shoes. Today, it is often seen that the people in the preaching places are wearing shoes. It is a fact that proponents of the doctrine cannot approve,

*“Na nīce āsane nisīditvā ucce āsane nisīnnassa aḡilānassa dhammaṃ desissāmīti sikkhā karaṇīyā”.*²²

Monks are also obliged in the *Sekhyā* practices not to preach the dhamma to those who are not sick on a high seat while sitting on a low seat. In such cases, the person who is not sick has been specially emphasized, taking into consideration the special attention that should be given to the sick person. “Dhamma should not be taught, having sat down on a low seat, to (someone) sitting on a high seat (and) who is not ill.”²³

We can find many teachings in *Tripitāka* with such humanistic concepts based on health issues. There were privileges for the sick person as well as privileges for those who took care of the sick. It is explained that, moreover, even royal duties were neglected by the royal doctor who treated the sick, and the king tolerated even such a situation reported in *Vinaya Mahāvagga*.²⁴ The origin of names like *Bhisakka*, *Sallakatta*, etc., for the Buddha is also in line with the examples of healing that existed in this Buddhist teachings (*bhisakko sallakattoti tathāgatassetam adhivacanam*). “‘Surgeon’ is a term for the *Thathagata*, the Accomplished one.”²⁵

VI. PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

The Buddha makes a very important and unique introduction to diseases. “Bhikkus, there are two kinds of illness. Which two? [143] Bodily illness and mental illness.”²⁶

Two special points can be raised here. That is, diseases are of two types: physical and mental. Mental illness is more frequent than physical illness. In focusing on mental disorders, special attention should also be *paid* to madness-type disorders. It is explained in the *Jātakatṭhakathā* that there are eight types of insanity.²⁷

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Suttavibhaṅga* (2012): 143.

²² *Suttavibhaṅga* (2012): 147.

²³ *Suttavibhaṅga* (2012): 149.

²⁴ *Mahāvaggapāli* (2014): 90-91.

²⁵ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2001): 867.

²⁶ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 522.

²⁷ *The Jātaka* (2016): 156-159.

- i. Lustful psychotic (*kāmummattaka*)
- ii. Mentally ill out of spite (*kodhumattaka*)
- iii. Changed one's outlook and become mentally ill (*diṭṭhumattaka*)
- iv. Mentally ill because of ignorance (*mohummattaka*)
- v. Mentally ill due to demonic possession. (*yakkhumattaka*)
- vi. Mentally ill because of bile (*pittummattaka*)
- vii. Mentally ill from alcohol (*surummattaka*)
- viii. Developed mental illness due to tragic reasons. (*byasanummattaka*)

It is a clear fact that a mentally ill person is an obstacle to society as well as to himself. When a monk named Gagga went insane, the Buddha said that he should give the monk Gagga the *ummatakasammuti*. "In a case, monks, where this madman now remembers the observance, now does not remember it... now comes for a (formal) act of the order, now does not come for it, I allow you, monks, to give the agreement for a madman to such a madman"²⁸ Because when there is such a person, disciplinary deeds etc. which should be done with the consensus and participation of the whole *Saṅgha*, are hindered.

There are 48 cases in *Pārājikāpāli* where it is stated that disciplinary offence will not happen to a mentally ill monk, and 136 such cases are mentioned in *Pācchittiya-pāli*. Buddhism teaches us to look at the mentally ill person with compassion by recognizing him as a patient. Buddha emphasizes how the rest of the society should act without taking his actions as an obstacle.

VII. PSYCHOTHERAPY

According to the *Rogasutta*, "people are found who can claim to enjoy bodily health for one, two, three, four, and five years; for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years; and even for a hundred years and more. But apart from those whose taints have been destroyed, it is hard to find people in the world who can claim to enjoy mental health even for a moment."²⁹ A mental illness can only be recognized as an illness when it is severe. Neither the patient nor the outsiders can recognize its initial stage or the simple ongoing stage as a disease. Similarly, the reluctance of a person suffering from a mental illness to reveal his illness is also a situation seen in many societies. In some societies, there have been reports of being ostracized from society, teased, and even physically tortured in such cases.

Buddhism recommends a two-pronged approach to the treatment of mental illness. The first is to prevent diseases. It requires meditation and insight. It is very important to try to keep the air, bile, and phlegm level. This requires understanding, impulse control, and compassion to avoid *āsavās*. Abstaining from neurodegenerative behaviors such as alcoholism and calming down can reduce mental illness. Seeing impermanence, being austere, and acting with the understanding of worldly dharma can keep one away from mental

²⁸ *Mahāvaggapāli* (2014): 163.

²⁹ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 522.

illness.³⁰ Alcohol destroys all wealth, makes one disgraceful, causes diseases, and weakens wisdom. Also, the Buddha preached that one who drinks alcohol will cut off his roots in this world. The individual mind is diseased with desires and hatreds.

Just as physical exercise is necessary to prevent physical ailments, mental exercise is necessary to maintain a healthy mind. Meditation is exercise for the mind. The mind is constantly moving towards various goals, but it is difficult to control. It is the teaching of the Buddha that if one controls the mind, the control of the mind will bring him healing. The sermon emphasizes that a wrongly formed mind causes more serious damage than an enemy does to an enemy, and a correctly formed mind does better than the good done by parents. Therefore, it is pointed out that working to control the mind through meditation primarily brings about mental relief, reduces the possibility of mental disorders, as well as leads to Nirvana, the ultimate goal of Buddhism. The *Sallekhasuta* presents a theoretical analysis related to keeping the individual mind healthy.³¹ The basic point taught in this sutra is to develop the ability to keep one's mind balanced and not allow it to go to different extremes when facing extremely critical situations.

Buddhism recognizes that mental factors are not the only cause of mental illness. Maintaining a healthy body is especially important for a healthy mind. The essential factors of a healthy body are maintaining the balance of air, bile, and phlegm. It is natural for an ordinary person to have defilements. If those defilements remain inactive in dormant form, he becomes an ordinary person. Also, the presence of controlled associations for various things like his sophisticated development, fulfillment of aspirations, social activity, respect, etc., is helpful. But due to the escalation of greed, hatred, delusion, and jealousy, they can develop into mental disorders. In the *Sabbāsavasutta*, the Buddha has given instructions on how to control the *āsavās* through *dassanā*, *saṃvarā*, *paṭisevanā*, *adhiṇāsanā*, *parivajjanā* and *vinodanā*, and *bhāvanā*. “Bhikkhus, there are taints that should be abandoned by seeing. Some taints should be abandoned by restraining. Some taints should be abandoned by using. Some taints should be abandoned by enduring. Some taints should be abandoned by avoiding. There are taints that should be abandoned by removing. There are taints that should be abandoned by developing.”³²

Just as objects that cannot withstand shocks are destroyed, the person who cannot withstand impulses is mentally damaged. Just as it is recorded in Buddhist literature that *Patācārā* lost her husband, two children, her parents and her whole world and fell into a state of mental illness because she could not bear the shock, *Rajjumālā* tried to live her life to the best of her ability but

³⁰ National Library of Medicine, accessed on (February 20, 2025) available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3860462/#:~:text=Despite%20the%20negative%20consequences%20of,cells%2C%20indicative%20of%20brain%20growth.>

³¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2001): 125-130.

³² *Majjhima Nikāya* (2001): 91.

finally decided to commit suicide when she reached the limit of endurance.³³

According to the teachings of the Buddha, “the unattractive is to be developed for abandoning lust. Loving-kindness is to be developed for abandoning hatred. Wisdom is to be developed for abandoning delusion.”³⁴ To get rid of self-centered desire, the awareness of the self must be cultivated. According to the *Mettānisamsasutta*, eleven things belong to a person with compassion: a pleasant sleep, a pleasant awakening, not having sinful dreams, being loved by all humans and non-humans, not being harmed by fire and poison, settling the mind immediately, having a pleasant appearance on the face, dying without delusion, and being born in the Brahma world after death. Showing the benefits of engaging in practicing Loving-Kindness, it has provided solutions to many direct mental problems such as lack of sound sleep, waking up angry, having nightmares, mental confusion, etc.³⁵

VIII. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PATIENT AND ATTENDANT

It is seen in *Vinaya* that a person with physical disabilities should not be ordained. That is, people with diseases like *Kuṭṭha* (leprocy), *Gandha* (boils), *Kilāsa* (eczema), *Sosa* (consumption), and *Apamāra* (epilepsy). Jīvaka’s request led to the imposition of discipline.³⁶ At that time in Magadha, when the five diseases were rampant, many patients came to Jīvaka and asked him to treat them. Jīvaka said that he could not use the time for treatment as he had the duties of a king and a monk. In the meantime, a monk comes to take medicine for one of the supposed five diseases because the monk receives treatment from the Jivakas, and the Jivaka recognizes him and asks why he became a monk. He says that he was ordained just to get treatment. There, Jivaka, who approaches the Buddha, requests not to ordain those suffering from such diseases as *Kuṭṭha*, *Gandha*, *Kilāsa*, *Sosa*, and *Apamāra*. Then, the Buddha promulgated a *Vinaya* rule as “Monks, one afflicted with (any one of) the five diseases should not be let forth. Whoever should let (one such) go forth, there is an offence of wrongdoing.”³⁷

An incident cited in *Mahāvaggapāli* shows that King Bimbisāra was suffering from a sinful disease (fistula). His outer garments were stained with blood. The queens seeing this made fun of him, saying, ‘the king having a period, soon the king will give birth’ On account of this king became ashamed.”³⁸ The king informed Prince Abhayarāja about this and arranged for him to seek treatment from Jīvaka.

In Buddha’s teaching, attendants and patients have been discussed separately. The Buddha explains that diseases can be cured when the attendant

³³ *Vimānavatthu* (2015): 319.

³⁴ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 2012.

³⁵ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 1573.

³⁶ *Mahāvaggapāli* (2014): 89.

³⁷ *Mahāvaggapāli* (2014): 91.

³⁸ *Mahāvaggapāli* (2014): 385.

and the patient are in proper practice. By the fact that he preached that the treatment of the sick is a treatment for the Buddha, we can understand what kind of attention the Buddha showed to the care of patients. The story of Pūtigattatissa Thero is an example given by the Buddha about caring for the sick. Having treated him physically, Buddha preached dhamma by showing the reality of life, and he became an arhant.³⁹ Buddhist literature records how Pūtigattatissa, who was suffering from a serious rash, was cleansed, bathed by the Buddha himself, and treated with medicine. No one should consider it improper to remove a patient's saliva, phlegm, sputum, vomit, toilet sneezes, and other unclean things. The five qualities of a deacon are shown in *Āṅguttara Nikāya* as follows.

- i. Ability to organize medication (*paṭibalo hoti bhesajjaṃ saṃvidhātum*)
- ii. Knowledge of what is not fit and what fits the patient. Removes unfit things from the patient. (*sappāyaṃ jānāti. asappāyaṃ jānāti. sappayaṃ upanāmeti. asappāyaṃ apanāmeti*)
- iii. Compassionately cares for the patient without hope. (*mettacittena na āmisantaro*)
- iv. Do not refuse to dispose of the patient's toilet, cough, saliva, vomit, etc. (*ajegucci hoti*)
- v. From time to time, he can strengthen the patient with good words (*dhammiyā kathāya sandassetum*)⁴⁰

Constant observation of the nature of the disease by the patient himself is helpful in the clinic. Therefore, feeling the increase or decrease of the disease through one's own observation helps in disease prevention. There are instances in *Bojjhaṅgasuttā*s where the Buddha sometimes met a sick monk Kashyapa and asked if his illness would increase or decrease or remain the same. This emphasizes that the patient should also be under some observation without putting all the responsibility on the attendant or the doctor. According to Buddha's teachings, it is very important for the patient to be able to bear pain.

In the commentary of the *Sabbāsavaṣutta*, a Padhāniya bhikkhu suffers from a stomachache. Piṇḍapātika Thera, who saw him in pain, advised him to be patient. It is explained in the *Sabbāsavaṣutta* how it was possible to treat not only the disease but also the *samsāra* disease. Buddhism shows that positive commitment of the patient as well as the attendant is necessary to cure diseases.⁴¹

Buddha recommended various practices for maintaining health. Among them, walking meditation is a very important health care method. *chaṅkamasutta* talks about the physical exercise and mental healing that comes from walking. *Pñcime Bhikkhave caṅkamane ānisaṃsā*. "Bhikkhus, there are five benefits of walking meditation."⁴²

³⁹ *Dhammapada* (2021):7.

⁴⁰ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 741.

⁴¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* (2001): 96.

⁴² *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (2012): 651.

- i. *addhānakkamo hoti* - Being able to travel with ease for a long distance.
- ii. *padhānakkhamo hoti* - Being able to concentrate the mind easily during meditation.
- iii. *appābadho hoti* - Being a person less sick.
- iv. *asitapīṭakhāyitasāyitaṃ sammā pariṇamaṃ gacchati* - Digests well what is eaten and drunk.
- v. *caṅkamādhigato samādhi ciratṭitiko hoti* - long-lasting samadhi produced by walking.

In the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, we find the method called sauna (a small room used as a hot-air steam bath for cleaning and refreshing the body) bath which is used as a luxury item in the present. A practice called *Jantāgharavatta* in *vattakkhandhaka* of *cullavaggapāli* has been recommended for this.⁴³ *Jantāghara* can still be seen today as ruins among the ancient temple complexes of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. This is known as a method used by monks in the past to prevent diseases in winter (*himapātabahulasamayesu*). Upon entering *Jantāghara*, the robes should be taken off, and seats should be arranged around it, and sitting is done on the planks. After removing the sweat from one person who was sitting, wash the plaque, and another person should be seated. It is advised not to sit with the door of *Jantāghara* closed. The reason for this is that if the door is closed, the heat may increase and burn the smoke. It should be possible to come away from *Jantāghara* at any time. This *Jantāghara* process is completely based on the health of the monks. Throughout the *Bhesajjakhandhaka*, there are instructions for the prevention and control of various diseases occurring in the body.

IX. CONCLUSION

The main finding of this research paper is that Buddha's teachings can provide health protection theories on a personal and public level. Buddhist practitioners and students of the teaching of the Buddha can fulfil their aspirations if health issues are not disturbed to them. Buddha assisted Ven. Pūtigattatissa, who had skin illness and after getting release pain he realized dhamma and became an *Arhanth*. This story indicates that physical health is an essential factor for a Buddhist practitioner. Women like Patācārā, Rajjumālā,⁴⁴ and Kisāgotamī became *Arahanths* after getting free from their mental confusions. There are incidents of those who got released from discomfort and attained enlightenment suddenly. The follower of Buddhist teachings should focus on the dietary and lifestyle practices taught in Buddhism to prevent physical diseases and to stay free from illness. It is also emphasized to avoid actions that disturb the mental state and impair mental functioning in the long term. By conserving the environment, everyone can achieve a healthy life by minimizing air and water pollution. This research paper drew attention to the fact that vegetarian food also plays an important role in health. A person with this kind of behaviour will be able to focus on cultivating their spiritual virtues

⁴³ *Chullavagga* (2013): 308.

⁴⁴ *Vimānavatthu* (2015): 318 - 335.

with physical and mental well-being. Under these circumstances, we can figure out that physical and mental health is essential for a higher spirituality and inner peace.

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TRIUNE SUFFERING: AN EARLY BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

P. R. Wasantha Priyadarshana*

Abstract:

According to Buddhism, three aspects of suffering are encapsulated in one suffering. While recognizing pain as an inevitable aspect of dukkha, Buddhism emphasizes its optional aspects as fabricated and collaborative suffering. Pain and fabricated suffering are detrimental to the well-being of one's family context, fear groups, and occupational and social environment. One's dukkha, which causes harmful consequences at the societal level, could be identified as collaborative suffering. Pain becomes an inborn life experience for every human being from birth to death. However, the reaction of various personalities toward physical or mental pain is different. The reason is understood as their different level of cognitive, emotional, and habitual reactions. These internal dynamics of an individual cause to falsify his/ her intrinsic pain into a fabricated level in which more sufferings arise than its authentic level. Therefore, authentic pain, fabricated, and collaborative suffering could be identified as triune.

Keywords: *Suffering, pain, fabricated suffering, social suffering, triune suffering, well-being, personalities, internal-dynamics.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Many discourses on suffering are available in various fields like religion, philosophy, psychology, and medicine. With considerable support from these different fields," pain management practice is progressing in health professions. Advanced and sophisticated knowledge of dukkha in Buddhist teachings may also help the field of modern health professions to enhance their repertoire of pain management. Therefore, the pre-sectarian Buddhist Psychological

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notion of “*dukkha*” will be discussed here. It should be mentioned at the very outset that the word “suffering,” the popular usage of modern academia, will be adopted here as the English translation of the Pali term “*dukkha*.”

II. SUFFERING WITHIN FIVE AGGREGATES OF CLINGING

The Pali term “*dukkha*” refers to every kind of human predicament. Modern academia proposes that words like ill, pain, sorrow, insecurity, unpleasantness, anguish, anxiety, unhappiness, conflict, and satisfactoriness are the meanings of “*dukkha*.”¹ According to the Pali English Dictionary of P. T. S., “*dukkha*” (SK. *duḥkha*) means unpleasant, painful, or causing misery.² Misapprehension of the somatic existence of individuality (*rūpūpādānakkhandha*) is understood as the source of somatic pains and oppression. Moreover, birth (*jāti*), asthenia (*jarā*), physical diseases (*vyādhi*), and thantophobia (*maraṇa*) are recognized as somatic pains and oppressions.³ Psychological pain (*cetasika dukkha vedanā*) comes into being due to union with what is displeasing (*appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*), detachment from beloved ones (*piyehi vippayogo dukkho*), and as unfulfillments of expectations (*yampicchaṃ na labhati dukkhaṃ*).⁴ These Psycho and Somatic pains are further known as suffering by physical or psychological pains (*dukkha-dukkha*).⁵ Pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral sensations come into being as conditioned experiences. The nature of conditioned experiences is possessed with the characteristics of impermanency and the continuation of the flux of change (*anicca; dukkhaṃ; yāvedanā niccā dukkha viparināmadhammā ayaṃ vedanāya ādinavo*)⁶.

We know that contemporary philosophy takes into consideration this impermanent nature of pleasant sensation; we are advised to see the unpleasant nature of pleasant sensations.⁸ It does not mean that Buddhism denies stimulus-driven hedonic pleasure.⁹ But its resultant nature is of impermanency and flux of change causing suffering (*yadaniccaṃ taṃ*), and religious discourses during Buddha’s time discussed the concept of “suffering” through materialistic and metaphysical overviews. The adoption of the teaching of Dependent Co-origination (*paticcasamuppāda*)¹⁰ explicates how Buddhism looks at “suffering” with a realistic overview, keeping equally aloof from such extremisms.¹¹ Instead of bringing about very sophisticated philosophical and religious theorizations for describing fundamentals of human suffering (symptoms,

¹ P. Gnanarama, *Essentials of Buddhism* (Pategama Gnanarama, 2000), 30.

² T. W. R. Davids and W. Stede, *Pali - English Dictionary* (Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), 324.

³ S, V, 420.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ S, IV, 259.

⁶ S, IV, 1.

⁷ Ibid., 233.

⁸ *sukhā vedanā dukkhato datṭhabbā*, S. IV, 207.

⁹ A, I, 80.

¹⁰ S. II, 2.

¹¹ S. IV. 230; A, V. 108.

diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment), Buddhism reveals its reality that exists in the mechanism causally and interdependently functioned by Psycho (*nāma*) and Somatic (*rūpa*) constituents of the individuality. (*‘idaṃ dukkhanti māluṅkayaputta mayā byākataṃ, ayaṃ dukkha samudayoti ‘dukkhanirodhoti’, ‘dukkhanirodhagāminipatipadāti mayā byākataṃ’*¹², *apicāhaṃ āvuso imasmiṃ yeva bhāmamatte kalebare saññāpemi. lokasamudayañca lokanirodhañca lokanirodhagāminiñca paṭipadanti*¹³). In the first discourse of the Buddha, the psychological clinging (*upādāna*) into this psycho and somatic mechanism is understood as suffering (*saṅkhittena pañcupā-dānakkhandhā dukkhā*)¹⁴. This suffering is further identified as suffering by construction (*saṅkhāradukkhā*)¹⁵. Well-recognized personalities in the field of western psychology like Carl Gustave Jung (1845-1910) highly appreciate this Buddhist insight of suffering as follows:

My task was the treatment of psychic suffering, and it was that impelled me to become acquainted with the views and methods of that great teacher of humanity those principle them was the chain of suffering old age, sickness and death there may be some afflictions which seem unendurable and require treatment just as much as a direct illness. They call for a kind of moral attitude such as is provided by religious faith or a philosophical belief. In this respect, the study of Buddhist literature was of great help to me since it trains one to observe suffering objectively and to take a universal view of the causes.¹⁶

It is very true that immense and considerable discussions, in respect to the Buddhist concept of “*dukkha*” (suffering), have been constructed by modern scholars.¹⁷ Nevertheless, our attempt is to expose the Buddhist psychological insight of the true aspects of suffering.

2.1. Psychology of triune suffering

According to Buddhist understanding, unhealthiness of the total individuality is *dukkha*. Physical and psychological pains (*kāyika dukkha vedanā, cetasika dukka vedanā*) become very common life experiences in

¹² M. I, 432.

¹³ A, II. 48.

¹⁴ S. IV, 420.

¹⁵ D. III, 20.

¹⁶ C. G. Jung, *Psychology and the East* (Taylor & Francis, 1978), 209.

¹⁷ S. Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press, 1982); S. Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); R. Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (OUP Oxford, 1998); Y. Karunadasa, *Early Buddhist Teachings: The Middle Position in Theory and Practice* (Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2013); N. Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: The Buddha’s Way of Mindfulness* (Weiser Books, 1965); U. Pandita, *In This Very Life: Liberation Teachings of the Buddha* (Wisdom Publications, 1991); W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974); P. De Silva, *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counselling: Pathways of Mindfulness-Based Therapies* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014).

our life journey. As a whole, conative, affective, attentional, and cognitive deficiencies and dysfunctions of *dukkha* are not intrinsic but optional. As it is further mentioned in Buddhism, suffering may arise due to both one's own and others' unhealthy mental attitudes (*apuññābhi-saṅkhāra*).¹⁸ Finally, Personal and social sufferings are reciprocally interwoven with each other. Suffering has its threefold aspects, namely (i) its inevitable physical or psychological pains, (ii) its fabricated levels, (iii) and social impact of one's unhealthy behavior.

The Channovāda Sutta very precisely presents these very deep-rooted layers of one's *dukkha*. As it is mentioned in this very sutta, Channa is highly affected by serious physical pain. The way he seriously suffered from that physical pain is graphically shown thereof. Senior monks Sāriputta and Mahācunda, as well-expounded Dhamma therapists, advocate Channa to recognize whether his painful sufferings are actual or as fabricated by his mental constructions (*Saṅkhāra*). The reply given by him proves that as he has eliminated tendencies of self-identification (*sakkāya*), these sufferings experienced by him are not fabricated but very authentic.¹⁹ The Suttas like Khemakha bring, moreover, very deep-rooted psychological phenomena of suffering to point out how actual painful sensations get fabricated by lingering residual of I-notion though, an individual has controlled mental impurities to some considerable level.²⁰ It should be mentioned further that Buddhism pays its concern not only to one's authentic painful sensations and fabricated sufferings but also to social suffering (*Paravyābādhāyupi saṁvatteyya*)²¹ caused by one's unhealthy behavior.

2.1.1. Pain in *dukkha*

The binomial Pali word '*dukkhadomanassa*' is used to recognize both psycho and somatic oppressions. In the context of this binominal usage, the term '*dukkha*' stands for bodily pain, bodily discomfort pain or uncomfortable feelings born from bodily contact.²² Nevertheless, in this very context, the Pali word "*domanassa*" implies mental pain, mental discomfort pain or an uncomfortable feeling born from mental contact.²³ According to Buddhist understanding, though pain has dichotomized aspects as physical and mental but its multified layers could be identified further (M, I, 396ff). The first stage of *dukkha* experienced by an individual is understood as a painful sensation (*dukkhavedanā*).²⁴

¹⁸ S, II, 40.

¹⁹ M, III, 264 – 266.

²⁰ S, III, 126.

²¹ M, I, 115, 415.

²² *katamo cāvuso dukkhaṃ yaṃ kho āvuso kāyikaṃ dukkhaṃ kāyikaṃ asātaṃ kāyasam-phassajaṃ dukkhaṃ asātaṃ vedayitaṃ idaṃ vuccatāvuso dukkhaṃ*, M, III, 250.

²³ *katamaṃ cāvuso domanassaṃ yaṃ kho āvuso cetasikaṃ dukkhaṃ cetasikaṃ asātaṃ vedayitaṃ manasamphassaṃ dukkhaṃ asātaṃ vedayitaṃ idaṃ vuccatāvuso dukkhaṃ*, M, III, 250.

²⁴ S, IV, 230.

According to the Buddhist perspective, the pain becomes a conditioning and conditioned experience. No possibility is found in the Buddhist Psychology that any particular pain can exist by its own. It arises (the pain) due to ontological support of psycho (*nāma*) and somatic (*rūpa*) constituents of the individuality and environmental factors.²⁵ Sense faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind), sense objects (form, sound, aroma, taste, and thoughts), and consciousness (*viññāna*) give rise to sense impressions.²⁶

The causal and conditioning process of painful sensation (*dukkhavedanā*) is well elaborated in the sutta literature as “There exists the eye element (the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind) and forms (sounds aromas, taste, and intellect) that are disagreeable and eye consciousness: in dependence on a contact to be experienced as painful, a painful sensation arises”.²⁷ This, the authentic pain, which has not been falsified by ego tendencies (I-making, mine-making, or I am-making tendencies), becomes the primal stage of *dukkha*. This authentic pain becomes a very common life experience to both unenlightened and all enlightened personalities.²⁸ It should, however, be noted that the Buddha and very famous Arahants as fully enlightened personalities had to encounter with those authentic pains caused by physical illness.²⁹ Nonetheless, as fully enlightened and liberated personalities, they were able to limit themselves to their authentic or primal level. The most significant fact that derives from this very context is that these fully enlightened personalities did not repugantly react to their painful sensations.³⁰

Therefore, they were able to keep that painful sensation at the level of primal or authentic without aggravating it into more fabricated levels. This discussion brings the insight further that the psychological process of falsifying authentic pain into the level of fabrication can be overcome by a fully enlightened mind. Of note, this fully enlightened mind is also possessed with mental potentials of minimizing physical painful sensations and maximizing psychological well-being into the optimal level known as *Nibbāna* - the ultimate happiness.

2.2. Fabricated sufferings in *dukkha*

What is really in the psychology of Buddhism has been comprehensively discussed as suffering.

(*dukkha*) is suffering by mental constructions (*saṃkhāra dukkha*). The psychological process of clinging to personality factors (five aggregates) becomes the source of fabricating suffering into more complicated and

²⁵ S, IV, 114.

²⁶ *cakkhuñcāvuso paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaṃ Tinnam saṅgati phasso. passa-paccayā vedanā*, M, I, 112.

²⁷ *manodhātu dhammāca amanāpā manoviññānāca dukkhavedaniyaṃ*, S, IV, 114.

²⁸ *assutavā puthajjano dukkhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho - sutavā ca kho bhikkhave ariyasāvako dukkhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho*, S, IV, 209.

²⁹ *mahākassapa pipphaliguḥāyaṃ viharāti ābādhiko dukkhito bāḷhagilāno... Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā ābādhiko hoti dukkhito bāḷhagilāno...*, S, V, 81.

³⁰ *dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighavā na hoti*, S, IV, 209.

extended levels.³¹ As a result of this process of clinging to personality factors, the notion of self-identification (*sakkāya*) comes into being. Craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and mistaken belief of self (*micchādittṭhi*) provoke this clinging process (*upādāna*) into self-appropriation, which is threefold; namely, mine-making (*etaṃ mama*), I am-making (*eso'ham asmi*), and my self-making (*eso me attā*).³² Moreover, the Mahāpunṇama sutta very precisely points out the psychological process of the superimposition of these threefold tendencies on the personality factors.³³ The super-structured self-identification, in respect to perception (*saññā*), mental construction (*saṅkhāra*), conceiving (*maññanā*), thinking (*vitakka*), consideration (*vicāra*) attention (*manasikāra*), and the process of conceptual proliferation (*papañca*) could be identified as the phenomena of falsifying authentic suffering into its fabricated levels.

2.2.1. Second arrow: Psychology of falsifying *dukkha*

The Doctrine of Dependent Co-origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) explicates the psycho and somatic process of individuality leading to suffering.³⁴ According to this process (with ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formation as condition; consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and form; with name-and-form as condition, the six bases; with the six sense bases as condition contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be,³⁵ suffering cannot be confined into a rigid unpleasant physical or mental experience, but becomes an admixture of both and a very natural experience of the personality (*vedanākkhandha*,³⁶ *dukkhindriya*, *domanassindriya*³⁷). The Buddha compares suffering to an arrow (*sallatto*).³⁸ An arrow that pierces into one's body spreads pains over the entire psycho-and somatic existence of the personality. The reciprocal interaction of this psycho and somatic basis causes intermix suffering, not only to rigid physical or mental, but into *dukkha* in which all phenomena of sufferings are encapsulated. Untrained personalities (*putajjhana*) infatuated by self-identification tendencies are devoid of distinguishing true painful sensation from its fabricated levels. This unskilled and undisciplined behavior of ordinary individuals causing to falsify the reality of authentic suffering into the fabricated level is well explicated in the sutta literature:

³¹ *saṅkhittena pañacupādānakkhandhā dukkha*, S. V, 420.

³² M, III. 18 - 19.

³³ Ibid., 15.

³⁴ *evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti*, S, II. 2.

³⁵ B. Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya* (Wisdom Publications, 2000), 534.

³⁶ S. III, 60.

³⁷ S. IV, 231.

³⁸ S. V, 207.

Bhikkhus, when the uninstructed worldlings are being contacted by a painful feeling, they sorrows, grieves, and laments, he weeps beating his breast and becomes distraught. He feels two feelings - a bodily one and a mental one. Suppose they were to strike a man with a dart, and then they would strike him immediately afterwards with a second dart so that the man would feel a feeling caused by two darts. So too, when the uninstructed worldlings are being contacted by a painful feeling, he feels two feelings - a bodily one and a mental one.³⁹

An uninstructed individual being infatuated by painful sensation harbours aversion (*paṭigha*), sensuality (*kāma*), ignorance and their inclinations (resistance-obsession (*paṭighānusaya*) passion - obsession (*rāgānusaya*), ignorance - obsession (*avijjānusaya*)).⁴⁰ Therefore, these internal dynamics and compulsive behavioral patterns (*kamma*) become the source of fabricating authentic physical and mental sensations into more aggravated levels.

2.2.2. *Dukkha* and the process of distortion

Suffering (physical or mental) that exists in a perceptual world, which is constructed by psycho and somatic constituents of the personality,⁴¹ is caused to be distorted by aforesaid internal dynamics. Consciousness (*Viññāna*) with its memories, mental impurities, and their inclinations as a precondition of perception cause to deform true painful sensations.⁴² These deformed, painful feelings are further distorted by the process of perception.⁴³ Moreover, subjective reactions and subjective involvements directed into misperceived unpleasant feelings (*dukkhavedanā*) distort them further into more complicated levels. Craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*) are understood as motives that play a vital role in distorting misperceived unpleasant feelings into such complicated levels:

When one abides inflamed by lust, fettered, infatuated, contemplating gratification, then the five aggregates affected by clinging one built up for oneself in the future and one's craving-which brings renewal of being is accompanied by delight and lust, and delights in this and that increases one's bodily and mental troubles increases, one's bodily and mental torments increases one's bodily and mental fevers increases and one experiences bodily and mental suffering.⁴⁴

The Buddhist discussion of conceptual proliferation (*papañca*), which has semantic neighboring characteristics with the Aggregates of Clinging

³⁹ Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya*, 1264.

⁴⁰ S, IV. 207

⁴¹ *apicānaṃ āvuso imasmiṃ yeva byāmamatte kalebare saññimhi samanake lokañca paññāpemi*, A, II. 48

⁴² *cakkhusamphassaṃ vedanānissitaṃ viññānaṃ*, M, III. 260.

⁴³ *yaṃ hi vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vijānāti*, M, I. 293.

⁴⁴ B. Ñānamoli and B. Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya* (Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), 287.

into Fabrication (*saṅkhārūpādānakkhanadha*), shows further how authentic suffering gets complicated by impacts of memories, future dreams, present sensual excitements, and unexpected repulsive tendencies into hazardous experiences.⁴⁵ Such fabricated and falsified suffering may exhibit through the individual's unhealthy physical (*savyāpajjam kāyasunkhāraṃ*), verbal (*savyāpajjam vacisankhāraṃ*), and mental patterns (*cittasankhāraṃ*).⁴⁶

An individual who confronts physical pains may come to misperceive sensual pleasure (*sukhasaññā*) as the only way to enjoy life (*subhasaññā*) and to overcome present unpleasant feelings (*asubhasaññā*). Furthermore, this process of misperceiving may delude the individual's mind to see the impermanent nature of fabricated and distorted suffering as permanent and inevitable (*niccasaññā*). These misperceived and distorted views may finally lead one's mind to accept oneself as the most unlucky person in this world (*saññāvipallāso*).⁴⁷ The process of misperceiving and fabricating the actuality of painful sensations into a more complicated level is recognized as a habitual tendency of an uninstructed individual.⁴⁸

Therefore, this process of fabricating sources of pain (*dukkhanidānassa saṅkhāraṃ*-false view (*micchādiṭṭhi*)),⁴⁹ ignorance (*avijjā*),⁵⁰ contact (*phassa*),⁵¹ craving (*tanhā*),⁵² name-and matter (*nāma-rūpa*)⁵³ into more complicated level is further analogized into a very dangerous precipice (*papāta*)⁵⁴ that causes to bring about hazardous sufferings in this very life.

2.3. Collaborative suffering in *dukkha*

For understanding collaborative suffering, Buddhism pays more concern towards the interaction between the individual and socio-economic and political environment. Once, the Buddha, addressing Rahula, advocates that one prior to performing his physical, verbal, and mental activities at societal context should reflect their painful consequences towards oneself and the society.⁵⁵ The classic story of Aṅgulimāla also shows how one's antisocial behavior is detrimental to social wellness.⁵⁶ The majority's concern of a loved one's suffering may finally become suffering of many (*mittāpi dummahā assuti*).⁵⁷

⁴⁵ *yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti yaṃ papañceti tattonidānaṃ purisaṃ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācaranti atitānāgatapaccuppannesu*, M, I, 112.

⁴⁶ A, I, 122

⁴⁷ A, III, 52

⁴⁸ *saṅkhārūpādānakkhandha, abhisankhārā*, M, I, 389, D, III, 217.

⁴⁹ A, I, 32.

⁵⁰ M, I, 67.

⁵¹ S, III, 60

⁵² S, III, 96.

⁵³ S, III, 101.

⁵⁴ S, V, 448ff.

⁵⁵ *attavyābādāyapi paravyābādāyapi Ubhayavyābādāyapi saṃvattēyya*, M, I, 415.

⁵⁶ M, II, 97.

⁵⁷ A, III, 54.

An unrighteous king can directly harm each phenomenon of wellbeing of the state.⁵⁸ This is very lucidly explained in the sutta literature how the unrighteous behavior of a king causes damage to the entire social wellness of the state:

Bhikkhus, when kings are unrighteous, the royal vassals become unrighteous; when the royal vassals are unrighteous, Brahmins and householders become unrighteous. When Brahmins and householders are unrighteous, the people of the towns and countryside become unrighteous. When the people of the towns and countryside are unrighteous, the sun and moon proceed off course. When the sun and moon proceed off course, the constellations and the stars proceed off course, day and night proceed off course this months and fortnights proceed off course. The seasons and years proceed off course when the seasons and years proceed off course, the wind blows off course and at random. When the winds blow off course and at random, the deities become upset. When the deities are upset, sufficient rain does not fall. When sufficient rain does not fall, the crops ripen irregularly. When people eat crops that ripen irregularly, they become short-lived, ugly, weak, and sickly.⁵⁹

The psychology of Buddhist polity, in addition to righteous behavior of a king, as his responsibility, restoration of justice (dhamma), peace and economic stability is highly emphasized.⁶⁰ The government's inability to achieve economic stability is well recognized as the sole destruction of the state, causing individual and social suffering.

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rise, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased from the increase of thought, the use of weapons increased, from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased and from the increase in the taking as life, people's life-span decreased, and as result of this decrease of life-span and beauty, the children of these whose life-span had been eighty thousand years as lived for only forty thousand".⁶¹

King's responsibility to restore economic stability is repeatedly emphasized in Buddhist teachings. The reason is that poverty becomes the main root cause of social suffering.⁶² Apart from the government's responsibility, the employer also has a vital role to play in overcoming economic crises that lead to an unhealthy society. Unsatisfactory and unfriendly occupational experiences also may create

58 *yasmim, bhikkhave, samaye rājāno adhammikā honti, rājayuttāpi tasmim samaye adhammikā honti*, A, II, p. 75 – 76.

59 B. Bodhi, *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya* (Wisdom Publications, 2012), 458.

60 D, I. 127 - 149; D, III. 80-98; D, III. 58 – 79.

61 M. Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya* (Wisdom Publications, 1995), 400.

62 *iti kho bhikkhave daliddiyaṃ pi dukkhaṃ lokasmiṃ kāmabhogino*, A, III. 351.

a hazardous environment for aggravating job stress of the employee at large scale. Therefore, the employer should practice professional duties and norms that are conducive to enhancing the wellness of the employees.⁶³ As the employer, professional duties and norms should be practiced by cultivated inner wholesome attitudes such as loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karunā*) altruistic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) as well as wholesome acts known as charity (*dāna*), pleasant words (*piya vacana*), beneficial action (*atthacariyā*).

III. DUKKHA AND ITS MANAGEMENT

As pointed out in Buddhist teachings, the inevitable aspects of dukkha or authentic pain cannot be overcome. But possibilities are found to regulating them. The other two aspects – fabricated and social suffering- could be eradicated if necessary, steps are followed as prescribed in Buddhism. Buddhism concerns each and every phenomenon of *dukkha*. For the cessation of dukkha, what Buddhism advocates is to realize the triune aspects of dukkha.

3.1. Medication and physical pain

According to the Buddhist view, pain may arise due to both physical (bile, phlegm, wind, imbalance of these three, change of climate, careless behavior, and assault) and psychological causes (*kamma*).⁶⁴ Buddhism prescribes suitable food, medicine (*sappāya bhojana*, *sappāya besajja*), and capable career (*patirūpa upatthāyaka*)⁶⁵ as the means to get rid of pains caused by physical illness. The medical chapter of Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga, points out a variety of medications and medical instructions for overcoming various physical illnesses. Visiting the sick, the responsibility of the doctor, nurse, and the patient as well, become well-discussed topics in Buddhism in respect to regulating physical painful sensations and physical illnesses.⁶⁶ The Buddha, having consultations from the royal physician Jivaka, for his physical ailment caused by imbalanced humors (*kāyo dosābhisanno*),⁶⁷ shows us that physical illness and its resultant pains are as inheritable life experiences of everybody.⁶⁸ One of the most emphasized facts of Buddhism is that claiming for a moment of true health in the physical body becomes sheer foolishness.⁶⁹

When orthodox approaches of contemporary medical science fail to manage these physical illnesses, Buddhism emphasizes healthy mental attitudes that could act as antidotes. When a patient constantly encounters various somatic pains healthy mind is highly emphasized as the only way to enjoy true well-being.⁷⁰ As constituents of healthy mental attitudes, that

⁶³ D, III. 191.

⁶⁴ S, IV. 230.

⁶⁵ M, III. 264.

⁶⁶ A, III, 144.

⁶⁷ V, I. 278, 280.

⁶⁸ *vyādhi dhammaṃ mā vyādhiyī'ti alabbhaniyaṃ thānaṃ*, A, III. 57.

⁶⁹ *imaṃ kāyaṃ pariharanto mahattampi ārogyaṃ paṭijāneyya, kimaññatra bālyā*, S, III. 1.

⁷⁰ *āturakāyassa me sato cittaṃ anāturaṃ bhavissatī'ti. evaṃ hite gahapati sikkhi tabbanti*, S, III. 1.

should be cultivated for regulating physical pain Seven Awakening Factors (investigation of the dhamma (*dharmavicaya*), energy (*virīya*), rapture or happiness (*pīti*), clam (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), equanimity (*upekkhā*),⁷¹ ten perception,⁷² purity of virtue,⁷³ unshakable conviction in the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha and cultivated moral habits and cultivated Threefold Training⁷⁴ are prescribed. It is repeatedly pointed out in the sutta literature that severe pains caused by physical illnesses can be mitigated by these cultivated healthy mental potentials of the patient.

3.2. Meditation for fabricated and collaborative sufferings

The process of mind surgery is prescribed in Buddhist psychology for the management of triune suffering. As the mind surgeon, the Buddha (*sallakatta*), used the mindfulness probe and discernment knife for pulling out craving arrow and poisonous ignorance,⁷⁵ that spreads toxin through mental impurities (covetousness and immortal greed (*abhijjhāvisamālobho*), illwill (*byāpādo*), anger (*kodha*), hostility (*upanāha*), disdain (*maṅkha*), contempt (*paḷāso*), jealousy (*issā*), stinginess (*macchariyaṃ*), deceit (*māyā*), deviousness (*sātheyyaṃ*), obstinacy (*thambho*), aggression (*sārambho*), conceit (*māno*), arrogance (*atimāno*), vanity (*mado*), negligence (*pamādo*).⁷⁶ In addition to the Buddhist method of mind surgery, “Noble purgation (*ariya virecana*), Noble vomiting (*ariya vamaṇa*) and Noble washing (*ariya dhovana*)”⁷⁷ are proposed to drain out those mental impurities. The Buddha, introducing these mind surgery methods that existed in “Threefold Training” (*tisikkhā*), assures their potential for establishing true wellbeing:

Bhikkhus, physicians prescribe a purgative for eliminating ailments originating from bile, phlegm, and wind. There is this purgative, bhikkhus; that I do not deny. Yet this purgative sometimes succeeds and sometimes fails. But I will teach bhikkhus, a noble purgative that always succeeds and never fails. In dependence on this purgative beings subject birth and freed from birth, old age ... death ... sorrow... lamentation

⁷¹ S, V. 75.

⁷² perception of impermanence (*aniccasaññā*) egolessness (*anattasaññā*), impurity of the body (*asubha saññā*), evil consequence of bodily existence (*ādhinava saññā*), elimination of sense pleasure (*pahānasaññā*), detachment (*virāga saññā*), cessation (*nirodha saññā*), disenchantment with the entire world (*sabbaloke anabhiratasaññā*), impermanence of all component things (*sabbasaṅkhāresā anicca saññā*), mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānāsati*), A, V. 108ff

⁷³ S, IV. 46.

⁷⁴ A, IV. 335.

⁷⁵ *ayamevettha attho: vaṇoti kho sunakkatta, channetaṃ ajjhakkānaṃ āyatanānaṃ adhi-vacanaṃ visadosati avijjāyetaṃ sallanti ... tanhāyetaṃ ... Esanīti ... sātīyāyetaṃ ... ṣatthanti ... paññāya ... Bhisukko sallakattoti ... tathāgatassetuṃ*, M, II. 260.

⁷⁶ M, I, 36, 37.

⁷⁷ A, V. 216ff.

... pain ... dejection ... and anguish.⁷⁸

The above-mentioned methods as mind surgery and noble purgation (or as noble vomiting, noble washing), are basically constructed in the practices of right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) and right mindfulness (*sammāsati*). Right concentration is prescribed as the way to hold unhealthy mental attitudes and to cultivate their opposite. It is further elaborated in the sutta literature that when somebody encounters unhealthy mental attitudes associated with ambition, hatred, and illusion, they should reflect their opposite signs.⁷⁹

The designated approach to attain right mindfulness is Vipassanā (insight meditation). Right mindfulness gives rise to wisdom (*paññā*) that becomes the knowledge of the cessation of all kinds of sufferings (*sabbadukkhaḥkhāyē nāna*).⁸⁰ According to these sutta expositions, an unhealthy mind is recognized as the source of both one's suffering and the suffering of many. Therefore, in Buddhist discussion of individual and social well-being, the transformation process of the unhealthy mentality of the very individual (as a citizen, an employer, an employee, a king as well) is highly taken into consideration as 'dhamma therapy' (*dhammapatikāra*).

IV. CONCLUSION

According to Buddhist psychology, an accurate understanding of the true aspects of *dukkha* as authentic, fabricated, and social (*pariññeyya*) paves the way for realizing (*sachikātubba*) one's happiness (*sukha*) in this very life. As already noted, *dukkha* becomes a feeling (*vedanā*), a mental function, or a mental response to an unpleasant, painful sensation (*dukkha vedanā*). But, as a result of being functioned within the psycho and somatic existence of the total individuality, it overgrows from its primal level into more aggravated levels. It is very noteworthy here that *dukkha* cannot arise on its own without having ontological support of the Five Aggregates of Clinging (*pañcupādānakkhandha*), which become synonymous with the Buddhist Psychological notion of the world (*loka*), rebecoming (*punabbhava*), and the all (*sabba*). These semantic neighboring terminologies, in addition to the psycho and somatic aspects of *dukkha*, imply its cultural, environmental, ethical, and social aspects too. Therefore, *dukkha* becomes a conglomerated unsatisfactory human experience of the total individuality.

It is very true that, *dukkha* is included in the teaching of three signata (*tilakkhaṇa- anicca, dukkha, anatta*) as a universal characteristic. Nevertheless. Possibilities are found in Buddhism to change the mental experience of *dukkha* from its primal level to its aggravated level. It is very clear, therefore, that *dukkha* does not become a universal characteristic because Buddhism

⁷⁸ Bodhi, *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya*, 1489.

⁷⁹ *pāpakā akusālā vitakkā chandūpasamhitā pi dosūpasamhitā pi mohūpasamhitā pi, aññaṃ nimittaṃ manasikātabbā-* M, I. 119ff.

⁸⁰ M, III. 245.

reveals the path (*magga*) that is to be cultivated (*bhavetabba*) for regulating inevitable (authentic pain) and eradicating optional aspects (collaborative and social) of *dukkha*. The cessation of threefold appropriation is prescribed for total eradication of triune aspects of *dukkha*. The Buddha and the Arahants as ideal characters demonstrate the practical path to enjoy complete freedom from triune suffering.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE: SELF-HEALING STRATEGIES ROOTED IN BUDDHIST PRACTICE - A GROUP OF DEVOTEES AT NGOC CHIEU MONASTERY

Dr. Ho Thi Ngu Long*

Abstract:

This paper aims at (1) cultivating inner peace based on Buddhist Philosophy; (2) designing self-healing strategies rooted in Buddhist practice – a group of devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery. The study dealing with a documentary and participatory research underscores the significance of spiritual mind practices for self-cultivating inner peace. By applying mindfulness meditation and practicing these Buddha's teachings, group devotees aged 30 to 50 at Ngoc Chieu monastery can embark on a transformative journey of self-healing and liberation from sufferings. Offering pragmatic guidance, this study serves as a valuable resource for those seeking purposeful paths to self-healing to true inner peace.

Keywords: *Cultivating inner peace, self-healing strategies, Buddhist practice, devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of global technology, life is becoming more and more chaotic and complicated, making it difficult for us to recognize moments of inner peace in general and the group of Devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery in particular. Financial instability, marital relationships, family discord, and work pressure make us easily caught up in stress, anxiety, and suffering. The tired mind is always chasing after external fame because of a lack of clarity and wisdom. Do you think there is a place that can guide you to true inner peace? Ngoc Chieu monastery provides a good environment, good friends, and the monastery can be a peaceful place to help you cultivate inner peace.

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According to this article, inner peace refers to a calm mind, true happiness, or liberation; self-healing strategies refer to the techniques established to help individuals practice to gain inner peace. Buddhist practice is defined as a one-day retreat including devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery sample 100 persons. They cover ages of 10 to 20 year olds, 20 to 30 middle aged, 30 to 50 aged, 50 to 70 aged, and 70 to 90 old aged.

The core of Buddhist philosophy is to turn inward, to identify the root cause of pain and suffering. The general purpose of this paper is to cultivate inner peace by generating self-healing strategies rooted in Buddhist practice to a group of devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery. Self-healing strategies are inner and outer healing starting from awareness to developed mind through mindfulness meditation. The specific purpose is a one-day retreat at Ngoc Chieu Monastery, namely group devotees aged 30 to 50, aimed at developing pure minds and self-healing disturbing thoughts effectively, helping Buddhists realize that true peace comes from within regardless of external circumstances. The retreat offers practical steps to develop a clear understanding of oneself and the world around, to cultivate and elevate the mind through mindfulness techniques in every action, and to achieve complete happiness. Therefore, the cultivation of inner peace: self-healing strategies rooted in Buddhist practice – a group of devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery” is examined.

II. CULTIVATING INNER PEACE BASED ON BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

Buddhism offers essential insights and practices for cultivating inner peace. Inner peace originates in the calm mind, integrated with the cultivation of mindfulness. This is the journey of transformation and healing toward inner peace.

2.1 Inner peace originates in the calm mind

In order to attain inner peace, one must train the mind. Simply by purifying our mind free from greed, anger, and delusion, it is as if the whole universe were purified of these defilements. That is why Buddhism focuses on the mind as the key to achieving a change in the way we experience life, in the way we relate to other people.¹

The mind is the source of all inside and outside actions. And mind is also the key to changing the nature of every experience. So, in the first verse of the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha taught, “Mind is the forerunner of all states” (*Manopubbaṅgamā dhamma*).² Although, mind is difficult to catch, but can be trained. And especially, we all become a tamer of your mind. The Buddha has taught in the Noble Eightfold Path is gradual training to get peace of mind and knowledge; it is also called Three Training (*Ti-sikkhā*), which are training in higher morality (*adhisīla-sikkhā*), training in higher mentality (*adhicitta-sikkhā*), and training in higher wisdom (*adhipañña-sikkhā*). In order to attain

¹ Peter D. Santina, *Mental Development: Fundamentals of Buddhism*, (Australia: *Buddha Dhamma Association*, 1996 - 2012), p. 3.

² Dhp 1, *Dhammapada*, trans. Thera Narada, (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1993), p. 1.

higher knowledge for peace of mind, proper behavior (*sīla*) should first be developed, continuing with mental training (*samātha*) and then, finally, developing wisdom (*pañña*).³ According to the Collection of the Middle Length Sayings, the Buddha said the sage who is called peaceful, apart from practicing the necessary helpful Dhamma, should only dedicate his study and practice to peace (*santi* or *Nibbāna*): “The sage is said to be at peace, he should not be slothful in wisdom, he should guard the truth, cultivate relinquishment, and train himself for peace itself.”⁴ A person may be already peaceful, but as long as he has not yet reached the absolute peace, he must continue the needful practice and aim at training for that peace itself.

Hence, practicing the mindfulness trainings, therefore, helps us be more calm and concentrated, and brings more insight and enlightenment.⁵

2.2 Cultivating mindfulness

In Buddhist philosophy, meditation is one key means for transforming the mind. Buddhist meditation practice is a technique to encourage and develop human concentration. Clearly, by engaging with particular meditation practice, you can improve your habits as well. With mindfulness, we are aware of what is going on in our bodies, our feelings, our minds, and the world, and we avoid doing harm to ourselves and others. Mindfulness protects us, our families, and our society. When we are mindful, we can see that by refraining from doing one thing, we can prevent another thing from happening. We arrive at our unique insight. It is not something imposed on us by an outside authority.⁶ Mental development is necessary through practicing mindfulness meditation. While the Sati (mindfulness) is a key instrumental *Dhamma* for ‘mental development’ (*bhāvanā*). According to Payutto’s comments, “Sati (mindfulness) aids the arising of wisdom (*pañña*). It helps the mind not to fall into the past or float into the future with delight and aversion, but seeing things as they are.”⁷ The method of developing mindfulness comes directly from the Satipatṭhāna Sutta.⁸

Mindfulness meditation includes mindfulness of body (*Kayā*) like developing awareness of breathing process (*anapana sati*), developing awareness of the postures of the body sitting, standing, walking, and sleeping

³ D. II 122, see also Bhikkhu Bodhi (Tr.), *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Samyutta-Nikaya)*, Vol I, (Oxford: PTS, 2000), p. 259.

⁴ M. III 286, I. B. Horner (Tr.) *The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipannasa)*, (Oxford: PTS, 1999), p. 335.

⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Happiness: Essential Mindfulness Practices*, (USA, Parallax Press, 2009), p. 26.

⁶ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Happiness, Essential Mindfulness Practices*, (USA, Parallax Press, 2009), p. 26.

⁷ Phra Debvedi (P. A. Payutto), *Helping Yourself to Help Others*, tr. by Puriso Bhikkhu, (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1990), pp. 37 - 38.

⁸ Nyasatta Thera, tr. *The Foundation of Mindfulness*, (Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1993), p. 7.

postures. Development of clear comprehension of one's actions such as talking, thinking, and bodily functioning. (*Sampajāna*).⁹ While the feeling (*vedanā*), all three types of feelings (*vedanā*) are included, painful, pleasant, neither painful nor pleasant, experienced through contacts of the six sense organs with external objects. All our mental and bodily feelings are included in this group.¹⁰ Whatever kind of feeling there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the feeling aggregate [*vedanākkhanda*].¹¹ The third contemplation is knowing a mind free from lust as free from lust, knowing a hateful mind as hateful, knowing a mind free from hate as free from hate, knowing a deluded mind as deluded, knowing an undeluded mind as undeluded, knowing a contracted mind as contracted, knowing a distracted mind as distracted.¹² And the fourth contemplation of the mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*). 1. *Kāmacchanda* - a strong driver for sensual pleasures. 2. *Vyāpāda* - strong drive of anger. 3. *Thinamiddha* - strong tendency to sloth and drowsiness. 4. *UddhaccaKukkucca* - a powerful tendency to be of a scattered and distracted mind. (violent behavior). 5. *Vicikiccā* - a powerful tendency toward doubts and suspicion.¹³

In short, by cultivating mindfulness at the present moment smoothly and effectively, letting go of all defilements in rough life, standstill all thoughts deeply are included. One will touch the real inner peace. Like Dalai Lama once said; Inner peace is the key: If you have inner peace, the external problems do not affect your deep sense of peace and tranquility. In that state of mind, you can deal with situations by support from calmness and reason, whilst maintaining your inner happiness. That is very important. Without this inner peace, no matter how comfortable your life is materially, you may still be worried, disturbed, or unhappy because of circumstances.¹⁴

⁹ Nissanka, H.S.S., *Buddhist Psychotherapy*, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 2002), p. 37.

¹⁰ Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, (Bangkok: Haw Rai, 2000), p. 21.

¹¹ S III 47, Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Saṃyuttanikāya)*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 886.

¹² M I 59, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima-Nikāya*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009), pp. 150 - 151.

¹³ Nissanka, H.S.S., *Buddhist psychotherapy*, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 2002), p. 39.

¹⁴ Dalai Lama, *The Essential Dalai Lama His Important Teachings*, (London: Hodder Mobius, 2005), p. 15.



Figure 2.2. Cultivation of Mindfulness on Four Foundations of Mindfulness

III. THE SELF-HEALING STRATEGIES ROOTED IN BUDDHIST PRACTICE – A GROUP OF DEVOTEES AT NGOC CHIEU MONASTERY

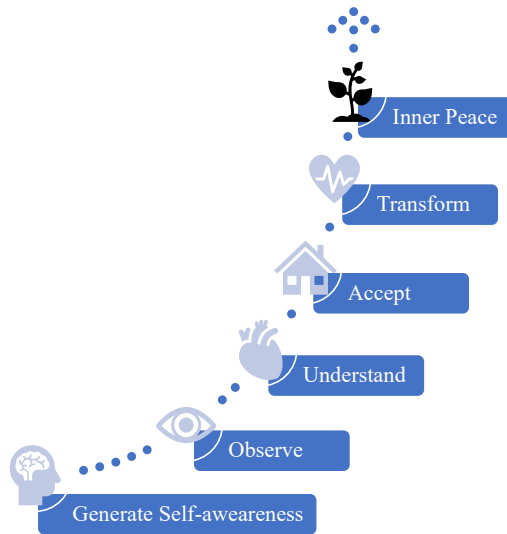
3.1. Overview of Ngoc Chieu monastery

Ngoc Chieu Monastery is a prominent nunnery located in the center of Lagi town, Binh Thuan, Vietnam; it is a spiritual center for the residence and practice for ten nuns. The abbot is an elderly Bhikkhuni and also a spiritual guide and master. Every half month, the monastery organizes a “One-day Retreat” for Buddhist Devotees. It helps Buddhists have a place to take refuge and confide their hearts. The course is designed to figure out techniques, suitable Dhamma to help Buddhist followers learn and practice the Dharma to soothe and heal the hidden pains in a busy life, aiming at spiritual development and inner peace.

3.2. The process of self-healing strategies rooted in Buddhist practice – a group of devotees at Ngoc Chieu monastery

The self-healing consists of inner self-healing strategy and outer self-healing strategy as follows: 1) Self-awareness for healing mental problems happening in the mental mind, 2) Observation into the process of the problem happening in oneself mind with mindfulness, 3) Understanding the causes of mental suffering in wisdom, 4) Accepting that unsatisfactory things always happens is a fact that we need to live wisely with. 5. Transformation or letting go of the things that make one’s mind anxious, restless and miserable to attain inner peace.

This process would be well applied for self-healing of group devotees at Ngoc Chieu monastery as well as individual training.



3.3. Process of self-healing

3.3.1. The inner self-healing strategy for group devotees of Ngoc Chieu Monastery

3.3.1.1. Be a VIP (very important person) for oneself

i. Value oneself

The confidence that radiates from a calm mind creates an authoritative power that makes others love, respect, and admire. And you are the only one who connects your soul with your body into a single and unified whole to create great value. Therefore, love yourself for who you are by making your mind as comfortable as possible. Every day is a new day; start with one's best. Then, take a deep breath, and feel the essence of the quintessence of heaven and earth gives us. Moreover, you learn how to respect yourself because you are unique and incomparable and you yourself have all the talents. Another step is to challenge yourself to find qualities and actions that are worthy of respect and to achieve your goals. Don't be afraid to start a new life; changing behavioral stereotypes is another step. Each day will give you a new step towards conquering this galaxy and yourself. Your life will sparkle with bright colors as you overcome all obstacles. It's hard but possible. Do not pay attention to failure; remember, failure is the main driving force that motivates you to have more energy to strive for success and happiness. Remind yourself of difficult situations you face and remember that you are the only one who can lift your spirits and motivate you to grow and succeed. The success in your secular life as well as your spiritual life are your real value.

ii. Independence seeking

Independence in the mind is focusing on developing the mind and managing negative and positive emotions well, which are essential to establishing the foundation for peace. Respect and be grateful for the pains

and negative emotions that are going on in your mind. Take the time to care and comfort your pains carefully and deeply. Whisper to it. Hey pains, did you come to visit me there? Every time you come to me, I feel very uncomfortable, but I still cherish you. Because when you leave, you will leave me with more life experiences. Breathe in 'I embrace my pains', breathe out 'I am happy with my pains', breathe in 'I cherish you', breathe out 'I am grateful for you.' When one directs attention to the breath in nostrils, inhaling and exhaling regularly, slowly, gently, negative emotions also disappear. Because our mind no longer pays attention to it. Focusing on your in-breath and out-breath regularly helps you to steady your mind and develop concentration naturally. Emotions like sadness, anger, stress, suffering, and pain cannot take root in your mind if you do not allow them to exist.

Focusing on your breathing is a sharp blade that cuts through all your worries and stress.

iii. Peace building

The connection of mind and body and harmony between inner and outer creating a perfected unity is a step to build up peace for oneself based on mindfulness on pains of mind and physical body as a main material. This step deals with taking the time to care and raise awareness in your mind. Look deeply and face-to-face with unhealthy desires that will only bring suffering when it is not satisfied and fulfilled. It is a bad thing that helps increase ego, making you more stuck in work and life only. Keeping track of your emotional flow by focusing on your breath or taking notes is one of the best ways to reduce negative emotions. Recognise and observe it deeply, and let pains come and go naturally. Do not stick to any sufferings; ignore them. And use four immeasurable (loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity) to welcome positive sorrows and negative ones calmly. If you can do that, your mind will really be peaceful.¹⁵

When you realize that your mood has left negative thinking. You bring your attention back to your breath in and out and focus on just observing. Carefully observing the moving of defilements. Do it as best you can, and don't judge the thoughts or feelings that go by; just be mindful and aware of their presence. "When one protects oneself, the other person is also protected. Therefore, one should protect oneself; the wise person is always unhurt."¹⁶

In short, inner self-healing strategy of a group of devotees at Ngoc Chieu monastery placing emphasis on VIP for oneself needs to be trained and mental development or practice in a methodical way for the absolute purification of the mind. Only what is actually experienced is rightly understood. It is therefore obvious that by this practice of mindfulness the inner peace is gained.

¹⁵ Thích Nu Lien Nguyet, *Nẻo Về Chân Nguyên*, (Viet Nam, Hội Nhà Văn, 2019), p. 120.

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), p. 932.

3.3.2. Embrace mindfulness on sitting postures

Four postures can be used to develop mindfulness and gain insights. Using breath is the lifeblood connecting body and mind. However, in this retreat, practitioners learn and practice sitting meditation. Practitioners are encouraged to practice standing, walking, and lying down meditation at all times. Effort practice mindfulness to these postures smoothly, practitioner will see clearly the Impermanence, suffering and non-self.

For sitting meditation, one should sit in the full lotus position (*padumāsana*) or sit in a half-lotus position, right leg on top of the left leg, your hands placed palm-up on you lap. Right hand on top of the left.¹⁷ Keep your back is straight, but not stretched, shoulder relaxed, relaxed body. The head and neck and the spine are in a straight line. Do not lean forward, do not fall back, if sitting like that, you will feel difficult breathing, heavy breath, follow several breathings slightly tired, chest pain. When there are such manifestations, we only need to move the body to the back or front a little, the breath will become natural, and the body relaxed. As Venerable Sobhaṇamahāthera (Mahasi Sayadaw explained: “Breath is the natural mechanism of the human body which needs for in-breath and drained off out-breath alternately and continuously as series”.¹⁸

Initially, the physical body began to enter the mode of posture adjustment. At this time the physical body may still be awake and unstable. The mind may be full of hindrances, e.g. restlessness (*uddhacca*) and anxiety (*kukkucca*) concerning for the external environment. Both mind and body will not communicate well as it should be at this stage. Only when the physical body has begun to adapt to the environment; and the mind began to build up confidence which causing good mind-body interaction, it will result in close and ultimate communication between the body and mind.¹⁹

¹⁷ Phra Ajaan Lee Dhammadhsro, *Keep the Breath in Mind*, (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation: 2005), p. 17.

¹⁸ Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw, *Mahāsatiṭṭhānasutta: The Way to Nibbāna*, (Thai Version), p. 63. cited in Dr. Sanu Mahatthanadull, *The Art of Breathing: Buddhist Principle and Methods*, Commemorative Book, The 2nd MCU International Academic Conference, May 19, 2016, (Bkk: JPrint Mahadhat, 2016): 1411 - 154.

¹⁹ Sanu Mahatthanadull et al, “A Conceptual Model of Bi-Dimensional Development for Happiness Access by Biofeedback Process”, A Research Report Funded by National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) Fiscal Year 2019, (Buddhist Research Institute: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2019), p. 176.

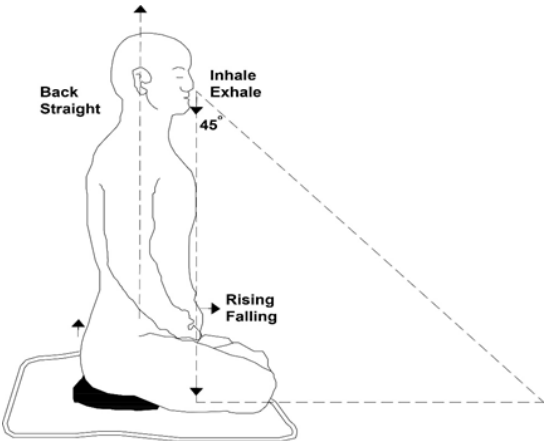


Figure 3.3.2 a Sitting meditation posture

Cross-leg posture is the ideal meditation posture. An experiment conducted in a British laboratory found that when one person was sitting in a cross-legged position, their brain waves immediately shifted from a fast-paced Beta rhythm to a slower and slower Alpha rhythm. It shows a more relaxed feeling, a more peaceful mind. In another experiment, it was discovered that a person sitting in the Lotus posture was less stimulated by external disturbances than those who sat in normal posture. Cross-leg posture can concentrate a deeper and clearer mind. The scientists conclude that the Lotus posture relaxes the motor senses and creates intellectual energy.

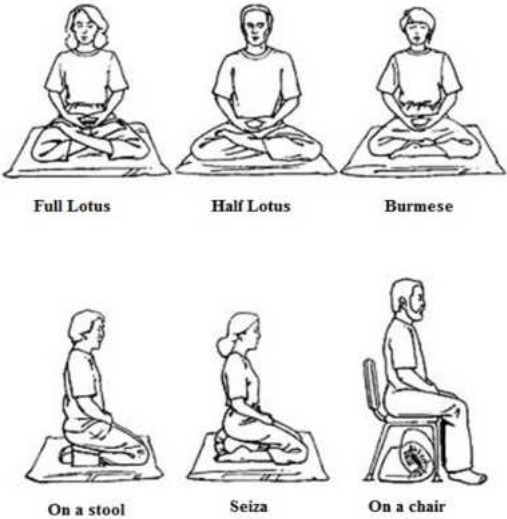


Figure 3.3.2 b. Sitting meditation postures²⁰

²⁰ Meditation Poses, on online, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/298715387785654983/>, (accessed Febuary 23, 2022).

Life occurs only when the in-breaths and out-breaths occur evenly. But when the wind in the nostrils that has gone outside does not go in again, or when that which has gone inside does not come out again, then a man is reckoned to be dead.²¹ Take a deep breath three times or more, it depends on your needs. Breathing in slowly and breathing out slowly. Keep your mind always focused on your breath. Don't think about the past, don't think about the future, just at here and now.

Breathe in “Bud-”, breathe out “-dho”. Pay attention the wind stream on the nostril or the movement of rising-falling of the belly. If we do not have a subject of meditation to hold on your minds, your minds will wander everywhere.

3.4. The outer self-healing strategy for group devotees of Ngoc Chieu monastery

3.4.1. Dhamma talk - Bhikkhunis; spiritual gurus

Listening to the Dharma is a simple and easy way to approach the teachings of the Buddha. Buddhist teachings are everywhere, around our lives. Listening to the Dharma directly or regularly listening to audio Dharma talks can provide inspiration to apply the Buddha's teachings to our daily lives. The Buddha's Dharma is like a rain, capable of nurturing and cultivating the seeds of wisdom and compassion in our minds. Therefore, when you listen to the Dharma from your teacher, be alert and listen with high concentration. The teachings are the truths of life that help you better understand the suffering and pain you are facing. Help you open your heart to share and confide the pain in your heart with your teacher and the practitioners in the retreat. Every time you peel off a layer of suffering, your soul feels comfortable and peaceful.

3.4.2. Nice and peaceful place

The outlook is also an important factor in self-healing. Ngoc Chieu monastery is a peaceful and sacred place, is not too majestic or splendid, but the pagoda still exudes a solemn beauty with its own unique architecture of the mendicant sect. Although not ancient, the pure and fresh space of the spiritual place creates a pleasant feeling, good for outer self-healing for group of devotees. calm their minds and soothe their stress. Sitting still, breathing deeply and gently, listening to the sound of bells and birds singing in the pagoda grounds helps Buddhists let go of all the worries in life.

3.4.3. The spiritual activities

Releasing birds, fish or any living animal brings blessings to the person who releases them. Releasing animals is an act of spreading compassion and love to the released animal. The group of Buddhist devotees will chant loving-kindness sutras and pray before releasing the animals back to nature. The prayer from the heart combined with external actions helps Buddhist devotees have moments of peace and serenity in their mind and release negative energies or forget the worries and sorrows in life. This is also a part of the ritual activity in

²¹ Vism 235; Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, p. 231.

the one-day retreat of peace guided by the abbot who is also a spiritual guide.

IV. THE BENEFIT OF CULTIVATING INNER PEACE: SELF-HEALING STRATEGIES ROOTED IN BUDDHIST PRACTICE – A GROUP OF DEVOTEES AT NGOC CHIEU MONASTERY

4.1. Impact to relationship in the family

To maintain a peaceful and happy family life, first of all, each member must have peace of mind and body. Buddha taught that the mind is the root of humans. Therefore, mind control is extremely important in any relationship. During the marriage and family relationship, it is even more important to learn how to adjust emotions and behave appropriately to keep peace among family members.

The consequences of not being able to control emotions will cause a lot of sad stories when family members have conflicts over words or actions. Causing negative emotions to rise because of greed, anger, jealousy, and envy, people often lose control of their behavior, but act instinctively, possibly killing people, brutally beating or scolding, and causing hatred, and revenge. Hence, it will create unwholesome karma due to the absence of love and wisdom. In the spouse relationship, if there is not enough understanding, trust, and love, it is easy to get jealous when feeling that the partner has something out of the ordinary. When love is absent, hatred will prevail. When lack of the right views (*Sammā Ditthi*), and right mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*), unwholesome karma will arise. So, don't be too quick to judge from one side.

Remember and practice the Buddha's teachings. The Noble Eightfold Path is the path of unsurpassed liberation, the path with eight branches leading to the cessation of all suffering in worldly life. When negative emotions prevail in the mind, practice Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*). It's simple, just sit still and take a deep breath. Don't worry about annoying problems anymore. Let the mind return to the present, let the mind on the body, breathe in and out to adjust the emotions, help the mind to calm down, breathe softly, mind clear and comfortable again. By Right Thought (*Sammā Sankappa*), slowly, observe where the cause of the change comes from? Does the problem come from work or between husband and wife, not enough love and sharing? Or He/she is too tired because of health problems? When determining the source of the problem, then sit down and confide in each other, gently advise, at this time husband and wife should understand and treat each other with loving-kindness, not selfish love; By practicing loving-kindness, you will understand the other person deeply, easily accept, tolerate, forgive and together lift your soul. Always have the Right View (*Sammā Ditthi*), optimism, and a positive attitude to face all problems, don't let emotions overwhelm reason.

Each member in a family should wholeheartedly give expressions of respect, loving-kindness for oneself and other members. Sincerely treat each other by heart from peace of mind.

4.2. Impact to whole society

In this modern life, we often come into contact with social relationships,

business partners, and encounter many difficulties in life and work. Requiring us to be alert enough and control our emotions well to behave appropriately. Intelligence and wisdom in dealing with people depend a lot on peace of mind. When our psychology is unstable, we easily fall into a deadlock because of work pressure, financial difficulties, and emotional problems that easily make us feel very uncomfortable, irritable, and stressed when things do not go as expected. When anxiety and insecurity rise, you feel overwhelmed.

Normally, when there is a challenge, the mind tends to focus on the “bad” things that are happening and haunt them for a while. We tend to exaggerate everything in our minds until it seems bigger than it really is. When we focus deeply on our sadness, the sadness will subside and give way. Inhale and exhale regularly, inhale “I look deeply into my anxiety”, exhale “I feel my mind at ease”, inhale “I accept my anxiety” and exhale “My anxiety has disappeared”. “When we are mindful, deeply in touch with the present moment, we can look and listen deeply, and the result is always understanding, acceptance, love and the desire to relieve suffering and bring joy.”²²

Most people who possess outstanding inner calmness are not only very calm and skillful in their daily behavior and communication, but also very decisive in making decisions. Because they have the ability to master people’s hearts, they can easily be flexible in their behavior in a reasonable and satisfactory way, making the relationship more harmonious.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper focus on “Cultivating Inner Peace: Self-healing Strategies Rooted in Buddhist Practice – A Group of Devotees at Ngoc Chieu Monastery”. With profound key Buddhist practice of mind development that contribute to the process of self-healing, emphasizing the transformative of individual and group of devotees at the age of 30 to 50. By mindfulness practicing into daily life is a key aspect of the Buddhist path. Through meditation and self-awareness, group of devotees can cultivate a present-moment, it helps them to observe their negative thoughts and marital relationships, family discord, work pressure without judgment or attachment. Ngoc Chieu monastery offers the inner and outer self-healing strategies urge enhances a group of devotee’s ability to value themselves, independent mind, stay grounded amidst life’s challenges, experience a profound transformation, and cultivate a lasting sense of harmony and inner peace. My suggestions for future research cover several new approaches to cultivating inner peace and new studies on self-healing. It is a source of inspiration for later researchers. The following topics may be interesting for future research: 1) Buddhism and the Journey of Self-healing: How Spiritual Awakening leads to Emotional Resilience, 2) The Art of Letting Go: Self-healing through Non-Attachment in Buddhist Philosophy, 3) From Suffering to Healing: Transformative Insights on Self-healing.

²² Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, (New York: Riverhead Book, 1995), p. 14.

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Apendix A

One-day Retreat Schedule	
Time	Content
7:30 - 7:50	Welcome and receive the cards
7:50 - 8:00	Take a seat
8:00 - 8:15	Invite the abbot give blessing words
8:15 - 9:15	Listen to the Dharma - “The way to developing pure minds, and self-healing according to Mindfulness meditation”
9:20 - 10:20	Walking meditation
10:25 - 10:55	Chant the Metta sutta
11:00 - 11:50	Having lunch in mindfulness
12:00 - 12:45	Mindfulness Relaxing
13:00 - 14:00	Sitting meditation at the Main hall
14:10 - 15:10	Dharma Talk - “Meditation techniques”
15:15 - 16:00	Sharing from the heart
16:15 - 16:45	Animal release ceremony - Spread loving-kindness
17:00	Blessing and End

Apendix B

The spiritual activites picures



Bhikkunis and devotess chant for world’s peace



The Bikkhuni giving the Dhamar and sitting meditation.



MEDITATION, PSYCHOLOGY, AND EDUCATION FOR PEACEBUILDING



AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE PURITY OF MIND (CITTA VISUDDHI) FOR THE MODERN WORLD

Ven. Penalaboda Gnanaloka*

Abstract:

At present, mankind has faced various mental diseases. The subject matter presents the ideas offered by numerous academics for mental issues, harmonizing the concepts of previous centuries and contemporary teachings, particularly via primary and secondary sources. As a result, the mental difficulties that exist in many selected regions of Sri Lanka, obtain this information, surveys, and interviews were used to investigate problems both in Sri Lanka and in other nations. People nowadays are dealing with a variety of mental health issues. Due to these concerns, people are presently seeking answers by unconventional means like hanging themselves, consuming poison, leaping into the sea or river, and being strangled. After evaluating the contents of the current study, the qualitative research approach was determined to be the best fit for this objective. Even now, humans have devised many methods for purifying the mind.

Keywords: *Freedom, happiness, mind, purification, dissatisfaction.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Buddhist learning is fundamentally a discourse of practices that aim to develop the right view, right intention, and right action, known generally in Buddhist circles as the practices of wisdom, tranquility, and discipline. Through the intertwined and cross-supports of these practices and learning, one would eventually learn to harmonize one's life, and invigorate one's daily life with contemplative insight and tranquility.

The training is a gradual, cyclical process. Insight, as the authentic view of reality, deepens in proportion to expanding wisdom. The Wisdom which is

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a discriminating faculty that guides the meditator on the path to the highest reality is gradually developed, by contemplating sensed data and the resultant information, such as truths (i.e. truth of suffering, fact of the sources leading to suffering, truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering). The right view that forms destroys the inner delusion.

To stay in the course of continuous learning and mindfulness, Buddha taught us the *Satipaṭṭhāna* (the Four Mindfulness), which is reckoned as the direct path to *Nibbāna*, constituting contemplation of the body, feelings, mind, and dharma (i.e. hindrances, aggregates: material form, emotion, cognition, volitions, and consciousness, sense-spheres, awakening factors, noble truths), and is premised on one's diligence, clear knowingness, mindfulness, free from desires and discontent, and refraining. The refraining approach can be reckoned as the basis of the learning practice as taking root in the common Buddhist epistemological understandings. Through Buddhist learning, the meditator gradually knows the functioning and characteristics of the mind and the reality of the sensed phenomena. With the buildup of wisdom, insights, and tranquility, the mind gradually gets purified.

1.1. Research problem

Numerous studies on mental chastity and the Purification Path have been conducted. However, for the needs of contemporary society, there is insufficient research on the purity of the mind (*Citta Visuddhi*). How does *Citta Visuddhi*, or purity of mind, impact *Nirvāna* and how does it prepare our minds for a better life? This relates to the research challenge.

1.2. Literature review

Purification of the mind (*Citta*) is the goal in the Buddhist approach to learning, by realizing that the mind is the master of all intentions and actions. When the mind is purified, one is perfect and establishes well in virtue, gains a tranquil state of mind and wisdom of direct knowledge of reality.¹ With the direct knowledge of reality and wisdom, ignorance which serves as a condition for volitional mental formation, affective reactions, and unproductive behaviors, would be eliminated. Without distractions and being prompted by unconscious or conscious attachment to views or assumptions, one can directly know reality in its true manner. According to Scharmer,² when one can suspend attached views or assumptions, which serve to reenact patterns of the past, and by remaining in the present and staying connected to the deepest source, one opens up to possibilities. Scharmer recommends transcending the conventional science paradigm, where theory is the container and facts the content.³ However, through pure sensing, sensory facts become the container and theory is the real content of the phenomenon. In this way, a holistic mode

¹ Nānamoli (1975): 57.

² Scharmer (2006): 84.

³ Scharmer (2006): 43.

of consciousness is established.⁴ In a paradigmatic sense, the unfolding of nature by shifting from attaching to view to simply being at a mere awareness level of sensing is an epistemological reversal.

Although Western psychologists and researchers have widely recognized the influence of internal psychological states when exposed to stimuli,⁵ which subsequently lead to various types of responses - whether visible (detectable, internal or external) or non-visible (conscious or unconscious),⁶ no available literature exists citing the existence of an automata controller, known as a source of knowledge and wisdom, as continuous intervention to organism (the mind states, i.e. perceptions and attitudes). The automata, or Dharmic controller, is known as the “*Dharma*”, which is also influenced by the Buddhist epistemologies, and which makes use of error (i.e. states of mind different from a calm *Nirvāna* state) and mindfulness for continuous improvement and the purification of the mind. In this way, a Buddhist approach to learning is formed which extends the SOR (Stimulus - Organism - Response) model. The SOR model is considered the most suitable theoretical framework that captures some basic psychological and psychiatric concepts.⁷ Mindfulness is a quality of consciousness that becomes active when a stimulus arises. Whether of Buddhist or Western psychology in nature, mind-object is considered as a stimulus, on top of physical objects.

Not only does the organism (the internal psychological state of mind, including perceptions and mental images, as well as affections like satisfaction) serve the advantages of marketing and branding,⁸ but it is also a useful indicator of purification of the mind. The mind is associated with three types of affective states: pleasant, painful, and indifferent feeling, which can serve as conditions for either the defilement or purification of the mind to arise. At the initial state of mind-training, the stimuli often bring about attachments manifesting as greed, hatred, and delusion, and thus causing corresponding response and producing mental errors (i.e. away from *Nirvāna*). *Liberation* is the ultimate goal of the mind purification, which connotes a complete extinction of suffering.

The SOR dynamics are valid phenomena, due to human dispositions and habits such as in product or service consumption.⁹ An equanimous mental condition is a quality of wisdom, allowing one to directly perceive the real nature of a phenomenon. The response occurs not only at the observable behavioral level but also at the karmic level, such as in rebirth which is tightly linked to the quality of the mind. Mindfulness plays an important role. Mindfulness prevents the mind from drifting and ensures the experience is consciously captured and brought to the mind controller for learning. Mindfulness is a skill that can be

⁴ Scharmer (2006): 159.

⁵ Mehrabian and Russell (1974): 54.

⁶ Jacob (2002): 12 - 13.

⁷ Buxbaum (2016): 65.

⁸ Patthracholakorn (2018): 86.

⁹ Tan (2018): 97.

polished by the use of *Vipassanā* or insight meditation,¹⁰ which is also known as the insight contemplation of a phenomenon or a process of phenomenalism, which takes the stimuli as the mindful objects and subjects the mind to a clear comprehension and penetrative understanding of the stimulus contacts.

In particular, the learning process integrates the central philosophy of Buddhism, known as the Noble Eightfold Path, which utilizes the right view (i.e. an epistemological view) to induce right thoughts and virtue, leading to a tranquil state of mind known as *Samādhi* (another manifestation of organism). When the mind's automata is no longer exhibiting ignorance, such as by direct knowledge of the "non-self" nature of phenomena and the mind, the mind is transformed into a so-called "Great Mirror Wisdom".¹¹ In this state, the mind remains in a purified state of mindfulness, free from attachment and defilement, while manifesting love, compassion, joy and equanimity known as the Four Immeasurable Minds.¹²

In other words, as one's learning gradually builds the capability to eliminate ignorance, through direct knowledge of the five aggregates of grasping (of form, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness), one gradually establishes the perception of inclusiveness (*sānti pāramitta*), which fosters the capacity to receive, embrace and transform afflictions, pains, and experiences, as manifested by the inclusiveness nature of the Four Immeasurable Minds. The learning process integrates the three important types of knowledge (*yāna*) known in Buddhist teaching: (1) the knowledge of the fact (*sacca yāna*), (2) the knowledge of the task required (i.e. learning process, *kicca yāna*), and (3) the knowledge of the completeness of the task (*kata yāna*, at the *Nirvāna* state). With these three forms of knowledge, one realizes the "Eye of Dharma", which secures the path of "stream entry" to *Nirvāna*.¹³ The learning loop thus adjusts one's views, thoughts, virtue, and tranquil states of mind and gradually transforms the consciousness into one belonging to supramundane consciousness. The process shown in Figure 1 can be used to facilitate a research process known as phenomenalism.¹⁴

A critical digest of the Western and Buddhist canons and literature reveals several relevant Buddhist epistemological perspectives. The epistemological insights provide an essential guide for the Dharmic controller within the model of Buddhist learning automata, facilitating the process of mind purification.

1.3. Aim of the research

The purpose of this research is to formulate a Buddhist model of learning automata from the literature of Buddhism, which aligns with the cyclical

¹⁰ Thich (1998): 43.

¹¹ Thich (1998): 43.

¹² Thich (1998): 43.

¹³ Karunarathna (1988): 79.

¹⁴ Jayasuriya (1976): 63.

model of automata,¹⁵ in a way that is more accessible to scientific circles. This model can also be effectively applied in studying social sciences, management, brand, and consumer behaviors, and in facing up to the challenges in modern industries.

1.4. Research methodology

Data were collected from a group of meditators located in Kekirava International Spiritual Center, who shared their concepts and practices, and the benefits relating to their meditation practices. The respondents' views are presented and discussed in the next section, which explains the integrative nature of some of the subtle illustrations of the learning processes, the embedded concepts, and the benefits. The researcher was also involved in the actual practices, for one month, so that the narrations of the data collected could better reflect the meditators' own experiences. The data serve only to illuminate the learning automata model derived in the literature review section.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The early Buddhist discourses abound with the different characteristics of the untrained and the trained mind. The mind of the world is trembling, fickle, and challenging to keep away from sense objects forty-five *phandanam capalam cittaṃ*.¹⁶ It flutters like a fish out of water, transitory, and falls wherever like forty-seven.¹⁷ It is incorporeal and roams afar all alone and resides in the cave of the heart.¹⁸ These are some of the characteristics of an untrained *citta*.

It is said that sensual pleasures are maddening, deceiving, and agitating the *citta*, a net spread out by the *Māra* for the defilement of creatures *ummādanā ullapanā kāmā cittaṃamāthino*.¹⁹ The mind which has the potential to be resplendent and luminous is always overcome by defilement. As a result, various traits of the mind could be examined such as trembling, fluttering, and far-going.²⁰ Man, perceives the world of phenomena through the interaction between the sense faculties and the objects of the world. According to the theory of sense perception, this is a process and it culminates in the generation of obsession-like craving, conceit, dogmatic views, etc. Buddhism is of the view that all thoughts begin in the mind, the *Citta* is supreme, and they are made by *Citta* (*Cittena nīyati loka*). Therefore, the mind becomes impure if left uncultivated and untrained. The objects of the world, such as forms, sounds, smells, tastes, contact, mental objects, etc., can generate defilements in the mind. *Kāmāni Citta Madurā*.²¹ As a result, the mind may become confined and defiled. When *Citta* is in such a state, it loses its natural radiance and luminosity, becoming a breeding ground for defilements. When such defilements Assault

¹⁵ Tan and Zomaya (1998): 34.

¹⁶ *Dhammapada*: 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: 35.

¹⁸ *Ibid*: 36.

¹⁹ *Therī gāthā* 2: 157.

²⁰ *Dhammapada*: 37.

²¹ SN 50.

one's mind, it cannot perceive the world of experience in its true perspective and could be easily misdirected.

As *citta* is an instrument of attention, one can turn one's thought away from a certain object or consciously direct one's *Citta* toward it. Due to these characteristics of the mind, it operates with inconceivable rapidity and perpetual flux and movement *nāhaṃ bhikkhave aññaṃ ekarūpampi samanu passāmi yaṃ*.²² As the untrained mind can cause great harm to a being, one is advised to purify and cultivate one's *Citta*. It is mentioned that whatever harm a thief inflicts upon another thief, or whatever harm a foe does to another foe, an ill-directed mind can cause far greater harm to man than another foe. *diso disaṃ yaṃ tan kayirā*.²³

The empirical data are presented that serve to enrich the understanding of the derived learning automata. First of all, it illuminates a typical experiential path of a novice meditator at the beginning stage to the process of mind purification. A summary of the study's findings and a statistical analysis's conclusion are presented here. It highlights a summary of the research findings of a sample model, validity and reliability, and hypotheses testing values, and provides a discussion on the limitations and recommendations that can be made upon the results of this research. It also presents a direction for future studies which can increase the scope of the presented results.

Here, we must have a certain understanding of the mind and its workings before adapting it to society. Knowing the mind's divisions and operations is essential to purify it, as well as its behavior, methods of operation, stages of awakening and dying, moments at which it becomes distorted, and moments at which it is restored. In this case, this mind becomes orderly, and one should get some understanding of the matters. For that, we have discussed. According to Buddhist doctrine, a major cause of the perpetuation of the cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*) and the suffering endured by sentient beings is an accumulation of mental defilements or unwholesome aspects of the mind. If one is to be freed from pain and the cycle of birth and death, these defilements must be eliminated. There has been much overlap between the descriptions of several types of mental defilements that are thought to function at various levels of consciousness.

The path of learning focuses on themes like mindfulness and the continuous efforts to eliminate mental fetters that cause distractions to the mind, until achieving tranquility that is unperturbed by worldly events or stimuli. The tranquility of the mind signifies a purified organism or the mental concomitant. i.e. the qualia of the mind, which upon contact or stimulus, causes wholesome responses. The following presents some of the important subtle themes of Buddhist learning corresponding to the empirical data. The state of completely terminating all the conditionally caused sufferings (i.e. anxiety, stresses, angered states of mind) is called *Nirvāna*.

²² AN mataputta sutta p.108.

²³ Dhammapada: 44.

“When we are no longer under the bindings of greed, hostility, and delusion defilements, right at that moment is the state of liberation, and thus, *Nirvāna* can be realized at the present moment. Buddha taught us to gradually see the realities in their truest sense. Along the process, we will gradually abandon all the conditioned existences”.²⁴

Perspectives that seek to grasp the truest reality have to be continuously learned and empirically observed. For instance, it was raised that when we associate too closely with a “self” orientation, our contemplation will automatically, without our awareness of it, become biased toward the things that favor us (The self).

“Loving-kindness, expressed through sharing with others, refraining from returning anger on those angering us, and intellectual guidance, has gradually transformed my mind to one that is less desire, less anger, and more understanding of the things I face. The right view is very important in my loving-kindness practice. I realize that many who anger me are not intentionally done, but just a result of their ignorance, and in seeing this, I let go of my anger, and turn it into understanding, forgiveness, and natural acceptance. My mind is calmed.” The *Dharma* controller – the wisdom and knowledge sources, guided by Buddhist epistemologies, are working for the SOR of the meditator.

2.1. Recommendations for future studies

The findings of this study highlight several key areas that could be further explored in future research. Since this research primarily concentrated on demographic and environment factors, the range of circumstances in which the applications of research may be employed is restricted, demonstrating that future research initiatives focusing on other areas are essential.

Indications from the two categories independently are not capable of providing unique distinguishing traits, only a collective summary; hence, future research should focus on each component separately. The study’s demographic selection was confined to Sri Lanka and a few places in England, but similarly or comparable research might be undertaken in other regions of the country. Furthermore, because the causes influencing males and females may differ, it is feasible to do additional study on a comparative basis by analyzing both outcomes independently.

2.2. Make mindfulness a habit

You can gain numerous benefits from practicing mindfulness in a variety of ways. One benefit is that it can support your ability to remain alert and aware of your surroundings. Among other benefits, being present allows you to focus entirely on your coworkers when they walk you through a difficult task rather than becoming sidetracked by thoughts like your to-do list or the ingredients you need to pick up later. The never-ending laundry list of possible explanations for why your last date didn’t contact you back. You can gradually release those background ideas by practicing the mindful focus technique,

²⁴ Yin-Shun (2008): 97.

which teaches you to focus on one job at a time. They're still there; they're just sleeping more soundly beneath the surface as opposed to demanding your attention. This facilitates mental bandwidth expansion, resulting in slower-paced, more pleasurable experiences. Reducing stress and increasing mindfulness can be achieved through meditation, particularly mindfulness meditation, which teaches you to sit with distracting ideas, acknowledge them, and let them go. For thousands of years, people have employed meditation as a method to cultivate awareness of the present moment. It may entail techniques to increase awareness and focus, establish a connection to the body and breath, learn to accept challenging emotions, and even change one's state of consciousness. Numerous physiological and psychological advantages, such as stress reduction and cognitive enhancement, have been well-documented. Although meditation is a common practice and is taught in many spiritual traditions, the technique itself is not confined to any particular religion or sect. Despite its ancient roots, it continues to be widely practiced today to promote inner harmony, serenity, and tranquility in civilizations all over the world. With hectic schedules and demanding lives, there is an increasing desire to relieve stress. Meditation may offer a viable solution. While there is no right or wrong way to meditate, it is crucial to choose a method that works for you. Nine forms of meditation are widely used: Meditating with awareness, Spiritual contemplation, Movement meditation, Concentrated meditation, Mantra introspection, Transcendental mindfulness, Gradual relaxation meditation, Loving-kindness, Meditation with visualization.

Not every type of meditation is suitable for every person. These activities call for distinct abilities and perspectives. How can you decide which form of exercise is best for you? "It's what feels good and what you're inspired to do," says a holistic nutritionist and author of meditation. To learn more about the various forms of meditation and how to begin, continue reading. Based on Buddhist teachings, mindfulness meditation is the most widely practiced and extensively studied form of meditation in the West.

When practicing mindfulness meditation, you become aware of your thoughts as they arise. You don't engage with the thoughts or pass judgment on them. All you do is watch and record any patterns that you see. This exercise combines awareness and concentration. It might be useful to focus on your breathing or an object while paying attention to any thoughts, feelings, or bodily sensations. Judgment. This type of meditation is easy to practice on one's own, making it beneficial for those without a teacher to guide them.

2.3. Spiritual meditation

Almost every religion and spiritual tradition incorporates some form of spiritual meditation. The variety of spiritual meditation practices reflects the diversity of spiritual traditions across the globe. Many of the meditation methods discussed in this article can be classified as spiritual meditation. Spiritual meditation is said to concentrate on strengthening one's relationship with a higher power and gaining a deeper comprehension of spiritual and religious meaning. You can practice spiritual meditation in a house of worship

or at your residence. Those seeking spiritual growth and establish a stronger bond with a higher power or spiritual force may find this form of meditation particularly beneficial.

2.4. Mediate intently

Focused meditation entails using any or all five senses to focus. You can direct your attention towards something internal, like your breathing, or you can bring in outside stimuli. Some instances are, talking about happy things with prayer beads, observing a candle flame while listening to a song, counting the breaths you take. Though theoretically straightforward, it can be challenging for novices to maintain focus for more than a few minutes at the beginning of this practice. Just return to the practice and refocus if your thoughts stray. This practice is great for anyone who wants to focus and pay closer attention, as the name implies.

2.5. Gardening on foot

In this dynamic type of meditation, your body and the present moment become more deeply connected due to your movements. Movement meditation is beneficial for those who find peace through action and wish to enhance their body awareness.

2.6. Meditation with Suttas

Many teachings, including those from the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, emphasize the use of mantra meditation. Repetitive sounds are used in this kind of meditation to help people relax. It can be a phrase, word, or sound; “om” is one of the most frequently used ones. You can speak your mantra quietly or loudly. You’ll become more aware of your surroundings and more alert after reciting the mantra for a while. This can open up new levels of awareness for you. Because they can concentrate more easily on a word than on their breath, some people find mantra meditation to be enjoyable. Some people like to feel the sound vibrate through their bodies. For those who prefer repetition over silence, this practice is also beneficial.

2.7. Gradual relaxation

Progressive relaxation, sometimes referred to as body scan meditation, is a technique for easing physical tension and encouraging calm. This type of meditation frequently entails gradually tensing and relaxing each muscle group in the body one at a time. In certain circumstances, it might also inspire you to visualize a soft wave flowing through your body to ease any stress. Before going to bed, people frequently use this type of meditation to decompress and relax.

2.8. Mindfulness with compassion.

Warm-heartedness The practice of meditation helps people feel more accepting, kind, and compassionate towards both themselves and other people. This practice typically involves wishing well to friends, family, acquaintances, and all living things after allowing oneself to be open to receiving love from others. This type of meditation may be especially beneficial for people who are harboring anger or resentment because its goal is to cultivate kindness and compassion.

2.9. Meditation visualization

By visualizing uplifting scenes, images, or figures, visualization meditation aims to increase feelings of relaxation, peace, and calm. This practice involves visualizing a scene clearly and adding as much detail as you can with your five senses. It may also entail picturing a respected or cherished persona emulating their traits. To improve motivation and focus, another type of visualization meditation involves visualizing yourself achieving particular objectives. A lot of people use meditation with visualization to improve their mood, lower their stress levels, and foster inner peace.

2.10. How to commence

Starting simply means sitting still and paying attention to your breathing. An ancient Zen proverb advises, “Unless you’re too busy, you should sit in meditation for 20 minutes every day. After that, you ought to sit for an hour.” Joking aside, it’s advisable to begin with little time increments, even five or ten minutes, and work your way up from there. If meditation isn’t for you, though, you can still use mindfulness to become more aware of things throughout the day.

That’s how you cultivate awareness of feelings. To truly connect with the experiences of everyday life, no matter how routine they may seem, use all five of your senses. Cleaning the shower cubicle? Take note of the smoothness of the tub, the cleaner’s aroma, and the rhythm of the sponge. Commuting by bicycle? Observe the wind blowing across your face, the distinct smells in each place you pass, and the way your muscles contract and relax as you pedal.

Observe your breathing. Intentionally slowing down your breathing can help you regain your composure and focus if you start to feel overwhelmed. Inhale slowly, hold it for a short while, and then exhale again. Repeat this process ten times. Remain inquiring. You can stay focused by keeping an open mind about what you can learn from any given circumstance. When emotions surface, consider what or why they were triggered. If you find yourself thinking about the same distracting idea repeatedly, find out more about its origins. You’ll probably notice that your mind still wanders from time to time. Try not to be too hard on yourself for not being mindful enough, this is normal. Simply shift your attention back to whatever it is you wish to concentrate on. Learning this skill can take some time, but in time, your mind will become accustomed to being in the present moment.

Write it down. It can be challenging to sort through and identify the most distressing thoughts when your mind is overflowing with anxious ones. If you’ve ever kept a journal, you may already be aware of the fact that writing down your thoughts often facilitates deeper exploration. The idea that journaling can help reduce intrusive thoughts and other mental “clutter” is supported by research. Working memory and other cognitive processes can therefore perform better and possibly reduce stress at the same time. Furthermore, putting your emotions on paper may even seem like a symbolic gesture. In a way, writing them down helps transfer them out of your mind.

2.11. Become melodic

Although many people find enjoyment in listening to music, it offers more than just a pleasant auditory experience. It is capable of assisting in reducing stress and elevating mood, strengthening memory and focus, encouraging learning, encouraging neuroplasticity, or the brain's capacity for adaptation.

If you listen to music regularly, you may already be aware that it helps you focus and complete tasks more efficiently. Perhaps you even have a playlist that calms you down when you're feeling overwhelmed by anxious thoughts, or a few favorite songs that you listen to while switching tasks and focusing. There are many advantages to listening to music, so keep enjoying it – you're not imagining its benefits.

2.12. Let it rest

When you're physically exhausted, getting a good night's sleep can help you feel refreshed. You might be surprised to learn, though, that adequate sleep can also serve as a protective measure against emotional distress and mental exhaustion. Your capacity to solve issues and make decisions may be impaired by inadequate or poor sleep, and you may also find it more difficult to control your emotions or recall crucial information.

Excessive fatigue can also result in mental overload, making it more difficult to focus on your tasks and separate yourself from your racing thoughts. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night to reset your brain for maximum performance during the day. It's often easier said than done to fall asleep, especially when you're anxious and your mind is racing with endless thoughts. In case you recognize that.

2.13. Go for a walk

Taking a walk outside and altering your surroundings is a fantastic way to decompress and refocus. Enhanced creativity is merely one advantage of taking a stroll. A regular daily walk can help you "reset" when the same thoughts keep coming up to divert you because walking also encourages more freely flowing ideas. Walking has long-term advantages, just 30 minutes of exercise can also enhance decision-making and reaction time right away before a cognitive task. Try incorporating a brisk walk or any other kind of exercise into your daily routine to improve overall mental health and reduce stress levels.

Keep your area organized. Procrastinators everywhere know that a thorough cleaning session is an ideal diversion from a challenging or unpleasant task. But this specific strategy may serve a deeper purpose than merely delaying your work. Think about the reasons you put things off. Maybe you don't know where to begin or feel stuck. Your immediate surroundings can significantly impact your mental state, even though you might not be aware of this. When your mind is as disorganized as your workspace, it may be difficult for you to focus or understand the concepts you're looking for. You consequently find methods to divert your attention from your lack of productivity. Rearranging your workspace can help you think more clearly, but it can also take a lot of time, which is undesirable if you're pressed for time. Rather, strive to keep your

workspace neat regularly to enhance productivity and cognitive function.

Pay attention to unrousing. Having trouble concentrating? Sometimes giving up on a problem is the best course of action. Consider it as a form of physical activity. I would think it would be very difficult for your body to jog continuously for the entire day. Your brain, too, requires rest periods. Your brain's default mode network is activated when you allow yourself to become distracted by momentarily losing focus. This allows your brain to rest. Your brain benefits from this period of rest, just as it does from sleep. Unrousing can enhance learning and memory, foster creativity, and sharpen cognitive processes. Some major causes of lack of focus are sleep, taking a stroll, daydreaming, but make sure it's from a reliable and helpful source, doodle a reliable source, discuss it.

Have you ever had a long conversation with someone you trust and felt rejuvenated and energized? That was most likely not an isolated incident. Speaking out loud about unpleasant emotions frequently relieves the tension they've caused. Thoughts may more easily pass from your conscious awareness and leave you feeling renewed when they weigh less heavily on your mind.

Since you have to explain your problems to others in a way they can understand, talking about your issues can help you organize your thoughts more logically. This frequently helps you see things from a different angle and generates ideas for solutions you may not have previously thought of. You can start sorting out your frustrations and decluttering your mind by having a conversation with family and friends. However, if you find it difficult to overcome the mental fog on your own, a professional can provide a little additional assistance. A counsellor can assist you: Examine the causes of concentration problems, Recognize and deal with looping thought patterns, Acquire coping mechanisms and mental-refreshal techniques, Take care of any underlying psychological issues that may be contributing to mental clutter. The final word, there are a few methods to restart your brain even though it lacks a reset button. If the tactics outlined above do not help you clear your thoughts and enhance your attention, consulting with a mental health professional is a useful next step. The research aims to grow and breed knowledge and the built environment, as well as human well-being, by combining traditional knowledge with ecological restoration. Traditional knowledge spread regionally across Sri Lanka is of particular relevance since it incorporates ecological, cultural, and scientific components of Sri Lanka's historic cultural past.

To achieve a high degree of human-ecological interconnection, it was required to select a place with a backdrop of different natural elements. In this context, the Na Uyana World Heritage Forest Reserve was chosen for this study to discover traditional ecological wisdom within the region and investigate its potential for application in environmental restoration.

In light of current destruction of the environment occurring throughout the world, ecological restoration is an essential issue to consider both locally and internationally. One of the key findings of this study is that restoration of nature cannot be applied to any conventional knowledge technique that builds

links with the environment. A practical approach for creating a reference environment and a method for identifying its outcomes can be employed appropriately for environmental rehabilitation. Several quick procedures and approaches are based on particular ideas; nonetheless, there remain concerns about their application.

Economically and many of the material possessions surrounding them have become the primary reasons for the house's psychological consequences. If the attitude of the individuals living in the house is weak, and if there are disagreements among them, the social and economic circumstances of that house will deteriorate. One way to assess and enhance psychological well-being is through mindfulness practices. According to him, mindfulness eliminates the brain's stress response and its "default system" of careless functioning, lowers psychological defensiveness, fosters adaptability, and permits the "holding" of emotions. Additionally, he asserts that paying attention is a crucial aspect of mindfulness practice, and is the first step in the process of managing emotions.

Clearing the mind facilitates a deeper understanding of how the mind constructs reality. You can use mindfulness to learn more about your unconscious cognitive processes. He claims that when one practices mindfulness, one experiences the self as a process, a rushing, teeming pattern that is ever-changing. He suggests that mindfulness could assist us in letting go of our personifications of the "false self". This approach fosters greater creativity and authentic self-expression, both of which are important for developing a comprehensive understanding of values and a commitment to living by them.

An introduction to mindfulness is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of mind cleansing. It's important to understand the differences between concentration and mindfulness meditation. When Freud described in his book *Civilization and Its Discontents* the oceanic feeling of infantile ego development associated with certain styles of meditation, he was referring to concentration meditation.

Concentration meditation is characterized by single-pointed focus. It is frequently used to induce a peaceful, trance-like state of awareness. According to conventional psychodynamic theory, it is a merger of ego boundaries. Concentration meditation was linked by Freud to a resurgence of primary narcissism, a psychological condition in which an individual's desire is focused on their relationships and ego. On the other hand, some theories suggest that awareness reinforces the ego from the inside. This is accomplished through promoting the growth of the synthetic capacity of the ego. Because it binds awareness to the object, mind purification is synthetic, it neither rejects nor holds on to whatever projects itself into the mind. But it does allow each moment to be experienced in its entirety.

It's essential to understand the differences between mind cleansing and concentration meditation if you want to enhance psychological wellness. Specifically, concentration meditation aims to alter one's internal experience, while mindfulness invites all psychic processes to arise as events that are compassionately observed for what they are. This approach allows for fun,

unstructured engagement that is both intrapsychic and therapeutically beneficial.

Multiple challenges have emerged in our cosmos since its formation. Although they were unable to find answers to all of those issues, they did discover a variety of solutions to challenges that happen in everyday life. In this context, Ayurveda and Western medicine are used to address certain difficulties, particularly physical ailments. Similarly, a method for managing mental disorders has been developed by drawing from religious concepts passed down through history. However, in the face of economic, political, and social crises, individuals are experiencing physical and emotional distress like never before. There, numerous approaches and centers for physical difficulties have been developed, and business growth has been accomplished. However, relatively few approaches for dealing with psychological issues have been created. To that end, the government and present rulers and authorities, must commit to developing a comprehensive approach to dealing with mental health conditions.

Notwithstanding the need for cutting-edge technology, psychological treatment approaches in Sri Lankan culture were limited in the past. However, they have tried several strategies to do this. It is seen during royal excursions of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and particularly when visiting sites like Ritigala. Also, statues like the Aukana Buddha statue, *Samādhi* statue, and others, as well as works such as Sandakada Pana from the Anuradhapura era, show how talented they have grown to reach mental purity. Because technology has advanced so much, countless psychologists have been born, and psychiatric tools and approaches can now be found all over the world. There have also been philosophers who have a thorough comprehension of the mind. Nonetheless, those academics have few particular chances or settings. To tackle psychological difficulties, universities have psychologists and other competent professors. However, it will be simpler for them to get together in one location and develop chances and facilities for individuals to bring out their abilities, clear people's minds, and encourage mental well-being.

Many worldly concepts have evolved as a result of people's overwhelming worldliness nowadays. As a result, this has given rise to numerous challenges. There have been a variety of issues, particularly in separations and divorces, property distribution, institutions, administration, highway traffic, discussion, sex, and so on. In such instances, people often make impulsive choices.

As critical options, they have employed basic strategies such as murdering themselves, strangling themselves, slashing themselves with weapons, shooting themselves, leaping into the sea or a river, killing themselves by consuming alcohol, and so forth. However, several governments are now considering small-scale interventions to address these concerns. In other words, an appropriate location in the country has been provided for them to channel their rage and anguish for the time being. The England trip was documented as events for persons with mental health difficulties to row on the river near Oxford University to enhance their psychological health, as detailed in my research approach.

Furthermore, extremely tiny marshes, working parks, and other structures have been built. If someone has issues with mental health, there are areas where they can mentally shut down till those problems are handled. There aren't many sites like this in Sri Lanka, in my opinion. Many individuals throughout the world are suffering from psychological conditions and challenges nowadays. Analytical examination for all of those difficulties and providing the correct solution to that query is critical time. I am optimistic that the research that I've conducted will contribute to helping to grow mentally emancipated people all around the world.

III. CONCLUSION

Both existing literature and empirical data were collected to support the proposed model of Buddhist learning automata for mind purification. Citing the text of *Satipaṭṭhāna*,²⁵ the Buddhist learning path utilizes mindful contemplation of stimuli, in terms of body, feelings, mind, and *Dharma*, to gradually eradicate defilements manifested through Organism, leading to purification of the mind with the purified of, the meditator will respond wholesomely, calmly, and in a wise manner.

Both literature and empirical data support the role of Buddhist teachings: 1. the wrong view of selfness, 2. doubt, 3. attachment to rites and rituals, 4. ill will, 5. sensual desire, 6. lust for the sensual plane, 7. lust for the formless plane, 8. conceit, 9. restlessness, 10. ignorance. As critical options, they have employed basic strategies like as murdering themselves, strangling themselves, slashing themselves with weapons, shooting themselves, leaping into the sea or a river, killing themselves by consuming alcohol, and so forth. However, several governments are now considering small-scale interventions to address these concerns. In other words, an appropriate location in the country has been provided for them to channel their rage and anguish for the time being. The England trip was documented as an event for persons with mental health difficulties to row on the river near Oxford University to enhance their psychological health, as detailed in my research approach.

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²⁵ Analayo (2003): 143.

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THE BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMOTION REGULATION FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING

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Abstract:

Emotion plays a significant role in every individual's life. Emotion has positive or negative effects on individuals depending on how they respond to emotions. Emotions directly influence the mental health of individuals. Therefore, emotional regulation is important for mental and physical well-being and inner peace. Different theories and techniques have been introduced in psychology for emotions. Buddhism has its terminology and techniques for emotion and emotion regulations. The number of sutta in the Sutta Piṭaka can be used for emotion regulation. This research investigates how emotion regulation affects the mental and physical well-being of individuals from a Buddhist point of view. This is qualitative research, and data is collected through textual studies. Texts are selected from psychological teachings on emotion and suttas from Pali Cannon, and data analyses are done using qualitative research methods. The result involves the utility of Buddhist teaching for emotion regulation that leads to the mental and physical well-being of individuals.

Keywords: *Emotion, mental, health, regulation, Buddhism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental and physical well-being are the most important parts of individuals' lives. When we consider the UN's goals of sustainable development, health should be an essential part. Emotion plays a significant role in both the mental and physical health of individuals. Regulation of emotions such as anger, hatred, and animosity have direct links with peace and harmony of society and the

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world. Recently, much research has been conducted on emotion regulation. This research revealed how emotions impact individuals. There has been a great deal of scientific research on the changes in the internal and external functioning of the body when there are emotions aroused. In particular, recent research has revealed the chemical changes in the brain while generations of emotions.¹

II. CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION REGULATION

However, defining emotions is very problematic and complex as emotion has not been scientifically studied just as in other fields of psychology.² The emotional process is complicated and can be interpreted from different angles; therefore, it is difficult to define. Additionally, psychologists do not agree on what is the most accurate language to use for emotions. 'Emotion' is the common term used in English to identify this complex mental state. The word 'émouvoir' in the French language is used parallel with 'emotion and the meaning is 'to stir up'. Earlier, words such as passion, sentiments, and affection have been used on behalf of 'emotion'.³ In addition, the 'process of affect' has been used in the same meaning of emotion in 18th century in philosophy. However, emotion is only one aspect of affective processes.

William James recognized four basic emotions: fear, grief, love, and rage. He considered the body as the main source of generating emotions. Paul Ekman, one of the prominent figures in the field of emotion studies, has introduced six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise.⁴ Later, he further elaborates on the basic emotions and says that all the emotions are not expressed through the face. He points out that there are positive and negative emotions, and amusement, contempt, contentment, embarrassment, excitement, guilt, pride in achievement, relief, satisfaction, sensory pleasure, and shame are included in the category of emotions. Richard and Bernice Lazarus present a list of 15 emotions: aesthetic experience, anger, anxiety, compassion, depression, envy, fright, gratitude, guilt, happiness, hope, jealousy, love, pride, relief, sadness, and shame.⁵

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES ON EMOTION AND EMOTION REGULATION

Several theories of emotion have emerged in psychology depending on each researcher's work on emotions as follows: Evolutionary Theory, James-Lange Theory, Cannon-Bard Theory, Schachter-Singer Theory, Cognitive Appraisal Theory, and Facial-Feedback Theory.

3.1. Buddhist perspectives on emotion and emotion regulation

When we consider Buddhist perspectives on emotion, there is no equivalent term for emotion in Buddhism, but Buddhism is rich in the same

¹ Lindquist, K. A., Wager, T. D., Kober, H., Bliss-Moreau, E., & Barrett, L. F. (2012), p. 131.

² Reeve, J. (2009), p. 337.

³ Dixon, T. (2003), p. 1 - 20.

⁴ Paul Ekman (1992), p. 550.

⁵ Richard and Bernice Lazarus (1994), p. 3.

teachings that consider emotions in psychology and has deeply explained how these emotional types of mental conditions affect on person. A few Buddhist scholars have pointed out the emotional teachings of Buddhism. David J. Kalupahana pointed out the connections between the concept of emotion in psychology and *vedanā* in Buddhism.⁶ For this point, he has made comparisons of Buddhism with William James's views on emotions. James was a psychologist who strongly asserted the physiological basis of emotions.⁷ According to him, emotions arise as a result of physical reactions to certain stimuli. Accordingly, emotions are feelings caused by mental changes in response to stimulation.

It is quite normal to experience certain mental states with sense functioning, such as feeling (*vedanā*), desire (*taṇhā*), happiness (*sukha*), suffering (*dukkha*), like (*manāpa*), and aversion (*amanāpa*), etc. According to Buddhism, these feelings arise through the perception of external objects, and all cognitive states cease only in the state of cessation of perception and what is sensed (*sññā vedayita nirodha samāpatti*), and this situation is similar to death. But at this time, the individual becomes physically calm and relaxed. This is evident in how mental states affect physical conditions. Therefore, the feelings experienced by the individual as pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral are unavoidable as long as the sensory perceptions are present. Moreover, they are physical changes that directly originate from the perception of objects rather than mental states. Furthermore, if the term emotion refers to feelings, an individual cannot be free from emotions as long as they have been experiencing the world through the senses. However, as explained in Buddhism, the experiences of whichever emotional responses, pleasant or unpleasant, that are related to the domain of feeling are temporary and non-self. In this way, Kalupahana, following Williams, pointed out that the mental activities explained as *vedanā* in Buddhism are similar to emotions.⁸

P. D. Premasiri is another scholar who studied emotions in Buddhism. According to him, although there is no special term to describe emotions in Buddhism, the mental states described under emotion have been sufficiently discussed in Buddhism. He proposed the term *dhamma* which describes mental states in Buddhism and can be rendered emotion in psychology. Therefore, mental states known as *kusalā dhammā*, *akusalā dhammā*, etc., represent positive and negative emotional analysis that is unique to Buddhism. He pointed out a profound emotional interpretation of Buddhism in terms of *āsava*, *anusaya*, and *prapañca*, etc.⁹

Pathmasiri de Silva has written several treatises on emotions in Buddhism. He has compared emotion with the five aggregates of Buddhism. The *Pañcakkhandha* represents the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects, and especially the aggregate of feeling (*vedanākhandha*) that indicates pleasant,

⁶ Kalupahana, D. J. (1987), p. 45.

⁷ James, W. (1890), p. 1049.

⁸ Kalupahana, D. J. (1987), p. 45.

⁹ Premasiri, P. D. (1990), p. 58.

painful, and neutral feelings are affected in creating emotions. He points out that emotions are generated through cognitive, affective, and conative activities, and further states that emotion is a combination of a complex mental process.

“In more detail, it may be said that emotions emerge as a joint product of perceptions, feelings, desires, beliefs, appraisals, and psychological arousal. Also, cultural and social filters have an impact on the experience of emotions. It is the aggregate of volitional formations that bring out the key concept of a person’s responsibility to the emotions.”¹⁰

According to the above scholars’ works on the emotions of Buddhism, a deep analysis of emotion can be identified in Buddhism. However, when comparing the studies on emotion in psychology, similar, as well as unique teachings on emotions and emotion regulations can be seen in Buddhism that are not revealed yet. The term ‘*kilesa*’ can be considered an evaluative term used to describe emotion in Buddhism. *Vatthūpa Sutta*¹¹ and *Dhammadāyāda Sutta*¹² mention 16 defilements. *Sallekha Sutta* listed forty-four (44) mental and physical actions motivated by unwholesome emotions.¹³ It is clear that *kilesa* is an unwholesome and negative emotion and *Kusala* is an opposite and positive emotion. *Āsava* (canker) (*kāmāsava*, *bhavāsava*, *diṭṭhāsava*, *avijjāsava*), *anusaya* (*rāgānusaya*, *paṭighānusaya*, *diṭṭhānusaya*, *vicikicchānusaya*, *mānānusaya*, *bhavarāganusaya*, *avijjānusaya*), *ogha* (streams) (*kāma*-sensual desire, *bhava* - re-becoming, *diṭṭhi* - view, *avijjā*- ignorance), *nīvaraṇa* (hindrances) (*kāmacchanda* - sensual pleasure, *vyāpāda*-ill-will, *thinamiddha* - sloth and torpor, *uddacchakukkucca* - mental restlessness, *vicikicchā* -doubt), *upakkhilesa* and *angāṇa* can be considered unwholesome mental conditions while *brahmavihāra* (*mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā*), *indriya* (*saddhā*, *virīya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, *paññā*) and *bojjhaṅga* are the positive and wholesome mental status. These mental phenomena can be encountered as emotions in Buddhism. In addition, different emotional expressions that represent positive (*lobha* -lust, *dosa* - hatred, *moha* - delusion) and negative (*alobha*- generosity, *adosa* – non-hatred, *amoha* – non-delusion) mental conditions of a person can be found in many places of Pāli canon that have to be studied in this research.

3.2. Buddhist methods for emotion regulation

One of the peculiarities of Buddhism is that it not only presents a vast list of emotions but also provides a necessary guide to regulate emotions properly. When an emotion-regulating plan is developed, behavioral, experiential, and psychological responses have to be considered.¹⁴ Buddhism has a number of different techniques that can adapt to emotional regulations in any psychological situation. Buddhist meditative practices help to develop a cognitive aspect of individuals. Mindfulness-based meditation techniques have been adapted as

¹⁰ De Silva, P. (2014), p. 100.

¹¹ M. I. 36.

¹² M. I. 3.

¹³ M. I. 40.

¹⁴ Gross, J.J (1999), p. 564.

cognitive therapy for depressed patients.¹⁵ Being mindful is a necessary part of the Buddhist way of life. Today, mindfulness is used as a tool in regulating emotions. Mindfulness changes the relationship of a person with emotions. When mindfulness is trained, the individual recognizes the bodily sensation of anger, and quick control is needed.¹⁶ Mindfulness may be especially helpful in developing emotional awareness. However, mindfulness techniques present in *Stipaṭṭhāna Sutta* are still not fully adopted for emotional control.¹⁷ In addition, a number of suttas, such as *Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta*,¹⁸ *Sabbāsava Sutta*,¹⁹ *Kakacūpama Sutta*,²⁰ *Aghātaṭṭhāna Sutta*,²¹ *Vepacitti Sutta*,²² etc., provide different methods and visions that can be used as emotional regulation modules.

Many studies have been conducted on emotions because emotions play a vital role in the mental and physical health of individuals. However, emotional regulation is a very complex process and Western psychologists are still developing systems in this regard. Buddhism is a religion of the world that pays much attention to the mental well-being of individuals, and it has developed its systems and terminology to operate and introduce psychological aspects of a person that cannot be seen in any other religions of the world.

Emotions influence a person's thinking, behavior, and many major activities of daily life, such as dealing with others. Emotion regulation is a key aspect of the individual's experience that shapes the responses to the world and contributes to overall well-being. A person's expression, management, and handling of emotions in different situations belong to emotion regulation. Emotions are natural and an unstoppable state of mind. However, the ability to regulate emotions properly leads to mental stability and comfort in complex personal and social life. Without proper emotional regulation, it can get out of control and result in inconsistent decision-making, interpersonal conflicts, and various psychological problems ultimately affecting overall quality of life. Therefore, emotional regulation should be a necessary part of life.

Emotion regulation is not just an individual endeavor, but cultural and traditional factors also have a strong influence. A number of factors such as family environment, social norms, cultural values, etc. contribute to shaping the expression and regulation of emotions. In particular, religious activities of the world make enormous contributions to the regulation of emotions. Since the beginning of human civilization, religions have provided the necessary guidelines for regulating human emotions.

¹⁵ Zindel V. Segal, J. Mark G. Williams, John D. Teasdale (2002), p. 46.

¹⁶ Grégoire, S., Lachance, L., & Taylor, G. (2015), p. 100.

¹⁷ D. II. 290.

¹⁸ M. I. 118.

¹⁹ M. I. 6.

²⁰ M. I. 122.

²¹ A. III. 185.

²² S. I. 220.

Emotion regulation means the ability to regulate one's own emotions and emotional responses. Currently, the emotion regulation process depends on the following facts: recalling mood-incongruent memories, helping others, exercising, seeking social support, using drugs and making social comparisons, etc.²³.

Presently, research on emotion regulation has progressed from simple techniques to more complex methods such as cognitive reappraisal and problem-solving. In addition, diverse techniques and theories for emotion regulation have been introduced in psychology. James J. Gross, who is a renowned psychologist and a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, is one of the pioneers in the emotion regulation field of psychology. He has conducted and published numerous research papers related to emotion regulation. His definition of emotion regulation is:

"What, then, is emotion regulation? Emotion regulation refers to the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions. Emotion regulatory processes may be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious, and may have their effects at one or more points in the emotion generative process."²⁴

Gross has given his definition covering five aspects: (1) How individuals increase, maintain, and decrease positive and negative emotions. (2) Neural emotional circuits do not overlap in emotion regulation. (3) Focus on self-emotion regulation. (4) Conscious and unconscious emotion regulation. (5) It does not presume whether emotion regulation is good or bad.

Gross's emotion regulation discussions include different areas of psychology such as Biological Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Personality Psychology, and Clinical Psychology, etc. Emotions are a very complex mental state, and many physical, psychological, and external factors are involved in the occurrence of emotions. Therefore, successful emotion regulating techniques have to cover all these factors.

The theory introduced by Gross is named the process model of emotion regulation.²⁵ He has identified five steps in emotion regulation as situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation.

(1) Situation selection means avoiding or choosing certain people, places, and objects for emotion regulation. Examples include avoiding people who insult you, avoiding places that make you anxious, and meeting people you love. Self-understanding of the individual is important for situation selection. (2) Situation modification is where the individual attempts to change aspects of the emotion to change its effects. It means changing

²³ Gross, J.J (1999), p. 557 - 558.

²⁴ Gross, J.J (1998), p. 275.

²⁵ Gross, J.J (1998), p. 559 - 560.

the environment, getting social support, managing stressful situations, etc. (3) Attention deployment refers to directing attention towards or away from aspects relevant to emotion regulation. In this case, it is possible to focus on the positive aspect by leaving the negative aspects to improve the positive emotions or to reduce the negative emotions. (4) Cognitive change refers to re-framing or reassessing the nature of the situation in order to change the emotional impact. Individuals may reinterpret emotional situations or situations in order to reduce the impact of their emotions or to modify emotional responses. (5) Response modulation refers to directly influencing physiological, experiential, or behavioral responses. These effects can be seen in various ways. Medications are used for muscle tension or sympathetic hyper-reactivity, exercise and relaxation, and cognitive behavioral therapy, and sometimes alcohol, cocaine, and cigarettes are used to modulate emotional experiences.

The Polyvagal Theory is another famous theory introduced for emotion regulation. This is a neurobiological theory and was developed by Stephen Porges.²⁶ The core of this theory is to study how the function of the autonomic nervous system affects a person's behavior, emotion management, and social interaction. The autonomic nervous system is responsible for regulating a person's heartbeat, digestion, breathing rate, and physical activities, and it has two parts: the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. This theory is used to understand various psychological and physiological conditions to treat problems such as trauma, anxiety, depression, and social difficulties.

The Polyvagal Theory contributes to the regulation of emotions through the functioning of the autonomic nervous system. Accordingly, the following points can be stated;

Ventral Vagal Pathway for Social Engagement: The ventral vagal complex (VVC) is associated with feelings of security, social connectedness, and when this region is activated, the individual experiences positive emotions and exhibits socially engaged behaviors. Here, emotions can be regulated through practices such as mindfulness, social support, and compassionate communication.

Sympathetic Activation and Emotional Arousal: The sympathetic nervous system (SNS) uses body energies in response to stress or threats; as a result, emotions are arousal. When this neural activity is at a moderate level, it can help the person face challenges, and when this neural activity is overstimulated, emotional regulation is disrupted, and the person may experience anxiety and anger. The SNS can be regulated and emotional responses are managed through techniques such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, and cognitive reappraisal.

Dorsal Vagal Shutdown and Dissociation: The dorsal vagal complex (DVC) can indicate an emotional shutdown in the face of high stress or

²⁶ Porges, S. W. (2022), p. 2 - 10.

trauma, and for people in these situations, grounding techniques, sensory self-soothing, and gradual exposure to safe and supportive environments to promote reconnection and regulation are recommended.

Polyvagal Flexibility and Adaptive Regulation: This means the ability to switch automatically according to environmental needs. Here, emotion regulation can be adapted through practices such as increasing mindfulness, self-regulation exercises, and social engagement. Stephen Porges has given this analysis in a very fine way through the Polyvagal Theory.

Affect regulation is an individual's emotional experience and ability to respond appropriately to emotions. When a person is faced with a severe emotional experience, they can sometimes cope successfully without succumbing to it. However, sometimes, the person can be put into serious problems through the responses given without being able to handle the emotions. Affect regulation theory explains how the individual develops the ability to manage their responses to emotions.

Allan N. Schore is a psychologist who extensively discussed affect regulation. He has broadly discussed the basis of neurobiology related to affect regulation and emotional development.²⁷ He comprehensively explained how emotions develop in a person from a young age by matching them with biological facts. Daniel Hill is a psychoanalyst and scholar who researched affect regulation and he has written a book called *Affect Regulation Theory*, which can be used clinically.²⁸ There are various affect regulation techniques, including mindfulness, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, social interaction, and self-compassion.

Cognitive reappraisal is an important strategy for the emotional regulation process. According to the interpretation of the situation or an event, the impact of the emotion is determined. Through cognitive reappraisal, the emotional response is changed because the individual evaluates his emotions or situation before the emotional response. This strategy is used in cognitive psychology and theories of emotion regulations in common. Richard Lazarus²⁹ and James Gross³⁰ developed this concept and used this method in the emotion regulation process. This method has a few steps. Firstly, the situation or condition should be identified that can provoke an emotional response should be identified. Secondly, the thoughts are evaluated where the emotions were triggered; that is called cognitive reevaluation. Next, the present situation is reevaluated by making different observations called Generating alternative interpretations. Then, the situation is positively interpreted and adapted where emotion is generated by choosing a reappraisal strategy. Finally, the selected reappraisal strategy is used for the situation, and during the process, the individual has been observing his emotional responses.

²⁷ Schore, A. N. (2016), p. 1 - 10.

²⁸ Hill, D. (2015), p. 1.

²⁹ Richard Lazarus (1991): 133.

³⁰ Gross, J. J. (1998), p. 560.

It is no exaggeration to say that there is no religion or philosophy more concerned about the spiritual existence of the individual than Buddhism. The Buddha always expected a maximum level of mental discipline from his disciples, and even very small mental states identified as sins or evils have been pointed out to be harmful to the individual's existence (*anumattesu vajjesu bhaya dassāvi*). It seems that such strict discipline was expected, especially from the monastic followers (*Bhikkhu, Bhikkhuni*). Moreover, for the laities, a moral framework was introduced and they can behave as they wish but without exceeding the limit. The ultimate aim of such a strict discipline was to regulate the physical and psychological behaviors of the individual to achieve mental peace for both himself and others. Therefore, Buddhism provides both a theoretical and practical understanding of various forms of affect regulations. The early Buddhist teachings comprise the Buddhist perspective on affects and emotion regulation procedures, which the Buddha introduced over time. One of the distinctive features of Buddhist emotion regulation is controlling or eliminating emotions identified as negative and developing certain emotions identified as positive.

Buddhism identifies the ordinary life of the individual as a worldly or mundane life that is filled with sensual pleasures. But the reality is that despite moments of contentment, worldly life is constantly filled with physical and mental pain and stress. Buddhism analyzes all these physical and mental sufferings experienced by an individual in terms of the concept of *dukkha*. Buddhism states that the world is based on suffering (*dukhe loko patiṭṭhito*). One might argue that this is a pessimistic worldview, but it is actually a realistic teaching. This can be ascertained by examining one's own life experiences.

Dukkha (suffering) has many meanings. It contains a deeper and widespread meaning than the sadness that comes in common speech. The simple meaning of *dukkha* is sorrow, trouble, or distress. Philosophically, *dukkha* has deep meanings such as uncontrollability, emptiness, and essencelessness. Pali English dictionary has given the meanings of discomfort, suffering, ill, and trouble.³¹ In addition, Walpola Rahula suggests meanings such as imperfection, impermanence, emptiness, and insubstantiality, emphasizing that it is more important not to translate this word due to its abundance of usage.³² Buddhism interprets suffering from a simple to profound philosophical context. Accordingly, there are three main types of suffering, namely, *dukkha dukkhatā*, *viparināma dukkhatā*, and *saṃkāra dukkhatā*.³³

(1) *Dukkha dukkhatā* - Ordinary sufferings arising from unpleasant experiences are called *dukkha dukkhatā*. When considering life and the world, there are three basic situations arising, existence and destruction. (2) *Viparināma Dukkhatā* - there is no happiness or pleasure in life that does not change and remains the same all the time. Something that felt happy a

³¹ Pali English dictionary (1921), p. 363.

³² Rahula, W. (1978), p. 17.

³³ S. IV. 259

moment ago may be sad the next moment. (3) *Samkāra dukkhatā* - Both the above forms of suffering are easy to understand. However, it is quite difficult to understand *Samkāra dukkha*, which has a profound philosophical meaning. It can be understood by analyzing the convention that is called egoism.

According to Buddhism, the words being, person, or the concept 'I' refer to a collection of physical and mental energies that change from moment to moment. This is called aggregates of clinging (*pañcupādanakkhandha*). Buddhism explains the individual in terms of five aggregates: the aggregate of form (*rūpakkhanda*), feelings (*vedanākkhandha*), perception (*saññākkhandha*), mental formation (*saṃkhārakkhandha*), and consciousness (*viññānakkhandha*). According to Buddhism, this is made up of causality, therefore, this is impermanent (*sabbe saṃkhāra anicca*). The Buddha said in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*³⁴ "Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering."³⁵

Buddhism perceives that the Noble Eightfold Path is the gradual path to be practiced to achieve liberation. This is also known as the central teaching of Buddhism. Liberation is introduced in Buddhism considered the highest level of mental satisfaction. At this level, all negative emotional influences disappear, and the highest level of positive emotion is experienced. As explained in Buddhism, by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path one can be able to gradually reduce negative emotional influences and develop positive emotions. According to some basic theories of emotions, physical basis plays an important role in the emotional process. Practicing the noble eightfold path is developed threefold training (*tivida sikkhā*): *sīla* (morality), *saṃādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom). Morality (*sīla*) means the development of physical restraint. Therefore, for a person who practices this gradual path, certain negative emotional reactions can regulate that have harmful consequences to the himself and others. Its ultimate goal is a complete mental transformation known as liberation. "And what is the noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of suffering? Just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration."³⁶

The Pali canon has several suttas that can be directly used for techniques in emotion regulations. The *Sabbāsava Sutta* is one of the most practical Buddhist teachings that can be applied to emotional regulation and it has proposed seven-step instructions. At the beginning of this discourse, a valuable

³⁴ S. V. 420.

³⁵ *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. (Tr.). Bhikkhu Bodhi, (2000), p. 1844.

³⁶ D. I. 311: "Katamanca bhikkhu dukhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ: ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo seyyatīdaṃ: sammā diṭṭi, sammā saṃkappo, sammā vācā, sammā kammanto, sammā ājīvo, sammā vāyāmo, sammā sati, sammā samādhi".

psychological idea is available. There is a statement as “*sabbāsavaṣaṃvara*”. It is translated as “the restraint of all the taints”³⁷ “controlling of all the cankers”³⁸. Oxford Dictionary defines cankers: an evil or dangerous influence that spreads and affects an individual’s behavior³⁹; taint: to damage or harm the quality of something or the opinion that people have of somebody/ something.⁴⁰ Accordingly, āsava is defined as something that damages the behavior of the person or an existing quality of something. Pali English dictionary has defined ‘*āsava*’ as certain specified ideas that intoxicate the mind.⁴¹ However, according to the above interpretations, ‘*sabbāsavaṣaṃvara*’ involves is to restrain the mind from all the āsavas that confuse the mind. As it is stated ‘*āsavaṃ vighātapaṇilāhā*’, āsava effects for mental exhaustion. Here, canker of sense-pleasure (*kāmāsava*), canker of becoming (*bhavāsava*), and canker of ignorance (*avijjāsava*) are mentioned as āsava.

One can practice each step of the sutta to regulate emotions as follows:

	Steps	Skills to be Practiced	Activities
01	By Seeing (<i>Dassanā Pahātabbā</i>)	Cultivation of a comprehensive understanding of the nature of emotions.	When emotions such as anger, and fear are experienced, the individual is made aware triggering patterns of these emotions.
02	By Restraint (<i>Samvarā Pahātabbā</i>)	Practice of self-restraint to avoid the situation where negative emotions are triggers	Avoid having conversations or activities that stimulate negative emotions such as anger or anxiety.
03	By Using (<i>Paṭisevanā Pahātabbā</i>)	Mindfully use the emotions in the activities where make skill developments and wellbeing.	When negative emotions such as sad or disgust arise, write poems or stories or engage in mindful practices or enjoyable activities that bring happiness or relaxation.

³⁷ *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, (Tr.) Bhikkhu Nānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (2009), p. 91.

³⁸ *The Middle Length Saying* (Tr.) I. B. Horner, (1953), p. 8 - 9.

³⁹ Oxford Dictionary (Online).

⁴⁰ Oxford Dictionary (Online)

⁴¹ Pali English dictionary (1921), p. 130.

04	By Enduring (<i>Adhivāsanā Pahātabbā</i>)	Developing tolerance and endurance towards negative emotions and retraining impulsive reactions.	When there is emotional distress, used to practice deep breathing or suppression of emotional reactions.
05	By Avoiding (<i>Parivajjanā Pahātabbā</i>)	Used to avoid discomfort environments or situations where negative emotions generate.	Avoid meeting poisonous people or changing the channels of the negative emotional news is broadcast.
06	By Removing (<i>Vinodanā Pahātabbā</i>)	Making an effort to remove negative emotions by replacing alternative behaviors or thoughts	Engaging in physical activities when there arises mental distress or talking with a supportive friend.
07	By Developing (<i>Bhāvana Pahātabbā</i>)	Development of positive mental states that boost emotional well-being.	Cultivation of regular mindfulness, loving-kindness, or empathetic thoughts.

Vithakkasanthāna Sutta is another valuable teaching that provides a five-step technique that can effectively be applied for emotion regulation. This technique has a close link with cognitive behavioral theories and techniques, and modern emotion regulation methods such as the Process model and cognitive reappraisal developed by James J. Gross. The aim of this *sutta* was to cultivate insight eliminating unwholesome thoughts from the individuals who are engaging in spiritual growth (*adhicittamanuyuttena*), however, the steps proposed in the *sutta* can be applicable in the emotion regulation process for ordinary persons as well.

The *sutta* uses the term *vitakka* to denote unwholesome mental states as *kāma vitakka*, *vyāpāda vitakka*, and *vihiṇsā vitakka*, which means ‘sensual, malign, cruel thought.’⁴² The term *vitakka* has been mentioned in a number of places in the Pali canon, and the following meanings are reflected such as reflection, thought, thinking, “initial application.”⁴³ According to the Buddhist analysis, the unwholesome mental states are totally eliminated in the stage of Arahant (*asekha*), but ordinary persons (*putujjana*) and the

⁴² D. III. p226; S. II. 151.

⁴³ Pali English Dictionary, (1921), p. 688.

individuals recognized as *sekhas* (who have not fully enlightened) still have various degrees of impurities of the mind to be eradicated. Such individuals regularly experience unwholesome mental states when they perceive sensory information in their spiritual and day-to-day activities and cannot evade emotional distress. Therefore, this *sutta* has stated five steps to overcome the adversities and emotional influences identified as greed, hatred, and delusion effectively. The following are the five steps:

1	Replacement- Contemplating an opposing thought instead of the oppressive thought (<i>Añña Nimitta</i>)	When the individual experiences arising of unwholesome thoughts such as lust hatred or delusion, a wholesome thought is replaced instead of unwholesome thought. As if a skilled carpenter takes out a coarse peg with a plain peg, a harmful thought is replaced by a positive thought.
2	Reflection on Danger - Reflecting on the consequences of oppressive thoughts (<i>Ādinava Nimitta</i>)	If the replacement of wholesome thought does not work properly, contemplate on repercussions and consequences of the harmful thoughts. One can avoid the impact of unwholesome thoughts being reflecting on their dangers and consequences.
3	Disregard and Forgetting - Attempting to forget the distressing thought (<i>Amanasikāra nimitta</i>)	If reflecting on its dangers and consequences does not support replacing wholesome thoughts, should try to forget it. If you disregard or forget unwholesome thoughts, the unwholesome thoughts may disappear.
4	Find the Root courses of Unwholesome Thoughts - Searching for the root cause of the distressing thought (<i>Vitakka mūla Nimitta</i>)	If disregarding, the unwholesome thoughts appear again, the attention should be paid to the root causes, arising from the unwholesome thoughts. Then the individual may find the roots of the distracting thoughts eliminate the roots and keep calm his mind.
5	Suppression through Force - Suppression of distressing thoughts by physical strength	If all the above attempts do not support to get rid of unwholesome thoughts, finally, use willpower to suppress unwholesome thoughts using wholesome thoughts with physical strength.

The individual can practice the above strategies when he experiences

negative emotional triggers.

3.3. Buddhist techniques of anger management and patience

Anger is a popular emotion that has both positive and negative values. Anger plays an important role in the survival of individuals. When a threat is identified, fear and anger make ready the body for fight or flight reactions. However, uncontrolled anger has negative results and may affect the entire life including personal relationships. Therefore, anger management is recommended, and counseling methods and techniques have been developed to regulate anger in psychology. Cognitive behavioral techniques occupy a special place in anger management.

Anger management and patience are highly appreciated in Buddhism, and extensive discussions in this regard are found in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Buddhism offers both counselling and therapeutic approaches to anger management and the cultivation of patience. According to Buddhism, anger is an unwholesome mental state associated with suffering (*dukkha*) and is the second of the three primary unwholesome mental states lust (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). Lust (*lobha*) is directly affected by anger that arises from the strong self-centered view recognized as egoism (*asmimāna*). *Paṭighānusa* is the passive state of anger that becomes activated when the stimulus is received. It is also related to feelings of unpleasantness (*dukkha*) out of three: pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*), and neither pleasant nor unpleasant (*adukkhamasukha*). Ill-will (*vyāpāda*) is a complex state of anger and is one of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) that hinder the true nature of the vision.

Numerous factors can be the root cause of anger. Certain psychological problems can influence excessive anger, in some cases, medical treatment and psychological counseling may be needed. Nevertheless, there are a variety of strategies that can be applied to regulate general anger. The *Aghāthavatthu Sutta*⁴⁴ describes nine factors that can lead to a rise of anger in an individual. The *sutta* uses the word *āghāta* to refer to anger. Anger arises because: (1) Someone has done harm to me, is doing harm now, or will do harm in the future. (2) Someone gets angry when harm has been done to their friends, is being done now, or will occur in the future. (3) Someone gets angry when a person they do not like receives help, has been helped in the past, and will be helped in the future.

*Āghāta Paṭivinaya Sutta*⁴⁵ proposes five steps to follow to control anger toward a person.

(1) Developing loving-kindness (*mettā tasmim puggale bhavetabbā*): Loving-kindness is the greatest tool for managing anger. Practicing loving-kindness alleviates the emotional stress caused by anger and reduces the potential harm to others caused by anger. (1) Developing compassion (*karuṇā tasmim puggale bhavetabbā*): *Karuṇā* means compassion and

⁴⁴ A. IV. 408.

⁴⁵ A. III. 185.

empathy. It is possible to calm the anger by bringing out some quality of the angry person or by reminding consequences of anger or being kind. (1) Developing equanimity (*upekkhā tasmim puggale bhāvēthabbā*). Anger arises due to clinging or collision. Anger can be managed by considering the outcome of anger or by considering its futility or adopting a neutral mindset. (1) Stop being remembered as the angry person (*asati amanasikāro tasmim puggale upajjitabbo*). If the angry person is remembered often, then the anger increases. Making an effort to forget the angry person can reduce anger. (1) Contemplating that the person is formed by his actions (*kammasasakathā tasmim puggale adhiṭṭhātabbā*). According to Buddhism, anger is unwholesome, and those who commit any evil action, as consequences, will suffer. Therefore, considering the consequences of his actions, one can let go of getting angry towards him without being a part of his unwholesome actions.

Another important teaching on managing anger is found in the *Dutiya Aaghāta Paṭivinaya Sutta*.⁴⁶ The *sutta* provides a profound analysis of how to interact with individuals in society without getting angry. Society is composed of people with different characteristic traits, and every individual has strengths or weaknesses. If someone solely concentrates on the weaknesses of an individual, it can lead to persistent anger. However, this *sutta* explains how to identify and appreciate the positive qualities of the individuals to dispose of anger towards him with examples:

(1) Even if a person's physical behavior is immoral, his speech can be virtuous. Considering this, the anger towards him should be ceased. For instance, even if a dirty cloth may have some parts still be useful, similarly, focusing on the good qualities of the individual should discard his faults. (2) A person's physical behavior may be ethical but his speech may not be. However, anger towards him should be moderate considering his good physical behavior. Just as a thirsty person goes down to a pond covered with mud and moss, removes the impurity, drinks water from his mouth, and washes himself off, similarly someone should forget others' bad speech and consider good physical behavior to appease the anger towards them. (3) A person's physical and verbal conduct can be immoral. But he occasionally does something to develop goodwill. A person who is very thirsty sees a long hole in a cow hoof hole and sits like a bucking cow and drinks the water from the cow hoof hole with his tongue and quenches his thirst. Considering this, the anger towards him should be tempered. (4) A person's physical and verbal behavior can also be immoral. Moreover, he does not perform any spiritual development or good deed occasionally. Even so, anger towards him should be tempered. Just as a noble person feels compassion towards a helpless sick person without shelter, similarly, one should be compassionate towards this person and wish him well because his harmful behavior leads only to his suffering. (5) A person's

⁴⁶ A. III. 186.

physical and verbal behavior is also good. Moreover, he occasionally gets a serenity or insight practice. Anger towards such a person should be tempered. Just as a thirsty person who comes to a pond with beautiful soft water quenches his thirst, he should quench his anger towards that person by considering his good physical and verbal behavior as well as his previous mental calmness.

Anger distorts the understanding of an individual and as a result obscures reality. In *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the Buddha warns the monks, without patience in a crisis situation, the individuals cannot be able to understand what should and what should not do to resolve the crisis, and the result is leading to suffering.⁴⁷ As instructions given to Moliyaphagga thera, the Buddha discusses how anger arises due to egoism, particularly when loved ones are involved.⁴⁸ However, there are times one cannot do anything patience is the only option. Therefore, in such cases, one should be patient and not be angry. If one is attacked by someone in front of their friends, even with rods and sticks, or if one is insulted or personally attacked, one should resolve that no bad word should come out of my mouth. My mind should not be in a perverse state, and one should maintain a compassionate heart without hatred.

IV. MINDFUL EMOTION REGULATION

Emotional regulation is the ability to respond to emotional experiences in an individually and socially acceptable manner. However, sometimes, one can develop an ability to delay responding to emotions as needed. Buddhism teaches many ways to regulate emotions aimed at spiritual goals, but they can also be adapted to worldly matters. Today, the most popular Buddhist teaching known as Right Mindfulness uses every aspect of Buddhism to approach a wide range of mental and emotional problems. Mindfulness is called *sati* in Buddhist literature. However, currently, mindfulness has deviated from Buddhism and has become a subject presented independently in the secular world. Canonical and non-canonical studies of mindfulness from various Buddhist perspectives are abundant. The Buddha taught the four foundations of mindfulness known as *satipaṭṭhāna*. This famous discourse is widely regarded as a masterpiece on developing mindfulness and expanding the ability to overcome emotions. It is known as the Great Discourse on Establishing Mindfulness (*Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*). One of them is medium-length discourse number ten,⁴⁹ and twenty-two⁵⁰ is in long discourses. The content of these sources will be discussed later in this chapter. Similarly, scientific research studies have been conducted on mindfulness in relation to various types of human psycho-physiological problems.

Mindfulness is a topic that has been widely discussed in neuroscience and other empirical research fields in the Western world for decades.⁵¹ Textual

⁴⁷ D. I. 1.

⁴⁸ M. I. 122.

⁴⁹ M. I. 55.

⁵⁰ D. II. 290.

⁵¹ Bikkhu Bodhi (2015), p. 122.

studies are important in the Theravada tradition that the knowledge of a skilled meditator always corrects textual knowledge. Buddhist scholars such as Rupert Gethin have shown this very eloquently.⁵² Scholars such as John Dunne have attempted to connect neuroscience with mindfulness as presented in Buddhism and other healing systems. After careful observation and data accumulation, John Dunne presented a phenomenological matrix of mindfulness practices from a neurocognitive perspective. They draw on examples from nearly all existing traditions to present mindfulness in a unique phenomenological matrix to identify challenges and ways forward for future mindfulness research. In their timely investigation, first, they studied mindfulness in the research landscape, second, the meaning of mindfulness as a trait, as a soteriological form or way of life, and third, mindfulness as a cognitive process. Under the study of the soteriological path of memory, Dunne examined how the term mindfulness, in its broadest Buddhist sense, encompasses a Buddhist practitioner's commitment to a lifestyle and orientation toward experience beyond specific meditative practices. However, Dunne uses mindfulness as a concept and many therapeutic techniques, including meditation, emphasize that mindfulness is clinically useful, but it may be too broad to guide empirical studies. After careful consideration of this constraint, Dunne although the phenomenological matrix of mindfulness suggests a seemingly broad and complex matrix, offers a welcome gesture to anyone from any discipline interested in mindfulness research and the ability to conduct their research and practice within an organized framework. Thus, Dunne points out that "this phenomenological matrix of mindfulness is presented as a heuristic to guide the formulation of next-generation research hypotheses from both cognitive/behavioral and neuro-scientific perspectives".⁵³

Apart from the two discourses mentioned above, many other practices of mindfulness play an important role in Buddhism. Of the seven points of enlightenment (*satta bojjhanga*) discussed in early Buddhism, mindfulness can be considered the primary factor contributing to a secondary step called 'investigation of phenomena' (*dhamma vichaya*), which strengthens the intellectual understanding of emotional responses. In cases of illness, monks are said to use mindfulness and other factors to quickly overcome the mental and physical effects of illness. These are shown in *Bhojjhanga Suttas* (also known as *Gilāna Suttas*) such as *Maha Kassapa Bhojjhanga*⁵⁴ *Maha Cunda Bhojjhanga*⁵⁵, *Maha Mogallana Bhojjhanga*.⁵⁶ On each of those occasions Venerable *Maha Kassapa* or *Maha Moghallana* or the Buddha fell ill and it was severe. Another monk begins with mindfulness and recites the seven awakening factors, and once he recites them, they can overcome their illness immediately. How is

⁵² Gethin, R. M. L. (1992), p. 36.

⁵³ Dunne J. D. (2015), p. 632.

⁵⁴ S. 46. 14.

⁵⁵ S. 46. 16.

⁵⁶ S. 46. 16.

that possible? Mindful emotional regulation can fully overcome emotionally disturbed moments. What power does mindfulness have to create a mental experience that can become a reality of complete freedom from illness? Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define what mindfulness is. Defining mindfulness will provide greater understanding and clarity of how it works in the human mind. With that understanding, it is possible to reexamine the context of overcoming illness and the emotions associated with it.

Therefore, controlling stressful situations is one of the important options available for this. Various techniques have been introduced for this purpose and it has been confirmed by research that practicing mindfulness-based meditation is one of the successful methods available for this. Kirk Warren Brown & Shari Cordon have pointed out how the establishment of mindfulness helps in the mental well-being of the person. They mentioned three points on how mindfulness strongly influences emotion and emotion regulation.

(1) Balancing Emotions - Mindfulness helps to break the habit of constantly evaluating and judging one's experiences. This balances the emotions and thereby reduces the intensity of negative emotions and sometimes positive emotions and adds a pleasant freshness to the person's experience. (2) Clarification of Perception – Establishing mindfulness enables a person to see things more clearly and objectively. This means that mindfulness minimizes the potential for negative emotions to distort or misinterpret events. For example, instead of seeing shortness of breath as a sign of panic, seeing it as normal shortness of breath. A selfish thought is seen as a thought, not a sign of a bad person. (3) Good Emotion Regulation – Mindfulness enables to pay sustained and open attention to thoughts and surroundings. This helps to prevent habits like overthinking and suppressing thoughts and aids in managing emotions better by encouraging individuals to face unpleasant experiences.

Mindfulness has been found to influence the emotional content and regulation of both trait and state emotions. Research on this is still being done, but it is becoming clear how mindfulness affects the brain's processing of emotions.⁵⁷

V. EMOTION REGULATION AND MENTAL-PHYSICAL WELLBEING

According to the constitution of the World Health Organization, the definition of health is as follows "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".⁵⁸ Accordingly, health means physical, mental, and social well-being that is built on the integration of all three aspects. It is also recognized that health is a basic human right. It can be seen that the majority of people give priority to physical health because physical health problems can be diagnosed easily, the harm increases by delaying treatments, and the facilities for treatments can be found

⁵⁷ Brown, K. W. & Cordon, S. L. (2009), p. 67.

⁵⁸ BASIC DOCUMENTS, Forty-ninth edition, World Health Organization (2020), p. 1.

easily, but the situation is different with mental health. Especially the personal and social attitudes toward mental health are different. It seems that individuals pay less attention to mental health in the common society. Individuals with mental problems are reluctant to admit that they have such a condition and even if they understood, they tend to ignore it and often attempt to hide it. Sometimes society's attitudes toward physical and mental disorders also strongly affect this. Moreover, since mental problems take time to intensify, the individual postpones having immediate remedies. Psychological conditions such as stress are often ignored by the person, so it seems that they suffer from it for the rest of their lives. But mental problems, even if they are minor, should never be ignored because their effects are not only on the person concerned but also on everyone he associates with, sometimes maybe the entire society. Furthermore, long-term mental problems seem to be a basis for many different physical health issues. Therefore, it is extremely important to maintain mental health properly for the physical and mental well-being of the individual.

However, caring for mental health is not as easy as maintaining physical health. Because the mental process changes very quickly. Similarly, the mental process associated with neurons is very complex and subtle and it is very difficult to observe. In the *Roga Sutta*, the Buddha has given an excellent analysis of how mental conditions affect an individual. It is explained that an individual can maintain his physical health for a long time, but he cannot stay for a moment without being mentally affected.

"Oh Monks, there are two types of illness: mental and physical. Some beings can go a year, two years, or even a hundred years without physical illness. However, it is very difficult to find any being in the world who is free from mental illness even for a moment, except for those who have completely eradicated their defilements."⁵⁹

Emotional distress is the most prominent among the mental sufferings of individuals. Therefore, emotional health is essential for a person's well-being, perfection, balance, and living a contented life. This means strengthening the person's ability to bear and tolerate. Because, due to various challenges the individual becomes depressed, but in ordinary life, the individual should overcome the setbacks and move forward despite the problems. While considering mental health, emotional health is also included in it, and it also seems that emotional health can be discussed separately. Mental health usually exists from the normal functioning of the brain and behavior to mental illness,

⁵⁹ A. II. 142 - 143: "Dveme, bhikkhave, rogā. Katame dve? Kāyiko ca rogo cetasiko ca rogo. Dissanti, bhikkhave, sattā kāyikena rogena ekampi vassaṃ ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, dvepi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, tiṇhi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, cattāripi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, pañcapi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, dasapi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, vīsati vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, tiṃsampi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, cattārisampi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, paññāsampi vassāni ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā, vassasatampi, bhīyyopi ārogyaṃ paṭijānamānā. Te, bhikkhave, sattā sudullabhā lokasmim ye cetasikena rogena muhuttampi ārogyaṃ paṭijānanti, aññatra khīṇāsavehi."

while emotional health is different and refers to well-being through the way a person lives.

“What is emotional health? And how to improve it?”, Emotional health is defined as a state of positive psychological functioning and an extension of mental health. It is considered the ‘optimal functioning’ end of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that make up one’s inner and outer world. It also includes an overall experience of wellness in what one thinks, feels, or does through both the highs and lows of life”⁶⁰

Emotional health is a positive psychological state. It can also be described as an extension of mental health. For that, it is a maximum developed state of the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of the individual about both the inner and outer world. Developing emotional health also has implications for physical health. Similarly, this leads to raising the overall quality of life of the individual. A fundamental step in emotional health is to understand emotions and their value. Every emotion has meaning and value and is part of the individual. But that does not mean we have to experience all those emotions for a long time or wait for them to surround us. Instead, the ability to identify emotions and use them effectively should be developed by increasing emotional intelligence. For that, individuals need to regulate, manage, and adapt their mental states. Emotional health and well-being include recognizing emotions as well as adjusting how individuals think about and respond to them.

Metta Sutta, mentions a number of physical and mental characteristics developed in the individual by practicing compassion.⁶¹ Developing these traits is very beneficial for emotional health and regulation. The *sutta* instructed to cultivate these characteristics for the aim of liberation, practicing these qualities leads to the well-being of ordinary life as well. Moreover, in developing these characteristics endure external and internal stressors. It also contributes greatly to strengthening social relationships.

Sakko - To be clever. It is the commitment to achieve one’s goals. In order to achieve one’s goals in life, one should work diligently with dedication and skill. It gives satisfaction and happiness when an individual sees the fulfillment of his goals.

Ujū Sūjū refers to unswerving qualities that should be developed in an individual. Maintaining these qualities with firm intention is called *Sūjū*. It is very important to uphold qualities and positive emotions that contribute to the well-being of oneself and society. This means maintaining honest, non-deceitful, and non-delusional traits.

Suvaca means flexibility. This can be seen as a very important mental state for emotional regulation. It involves flexibly admitting one’s weaknesses and mistakes when they are pointed out. Often, when weaknesses are highlighted, individuals react with anger or resentment. Developing this quality also helps with emotional intelligence.

⁶⁰ Jennifer, G. S & Rani, U. S. (2018), p. 95.

⁶¹ *Sn.* 143 – 152.

Mudu is also a very positive emotional state. It means having gentle qualities. This mental trait is especially important in interpersonal relationships, as it involves acknowledging preferences without frowning. It implies a nature of physical, verbal, and mental behavior without stiffness. Individuals with these characteristics are admired by many.

Anatimāni – This implies having humble qualities. This quality is also very important for strengthening interpersonal relationships. Self-exaltation while despising others is often seen mental condition known as *māna*. It creates personal relationships. Humility is very important in managing emotions.

Samtussa: happiness - This is the deep satisfaction of the individual mind associated with the emotion of happiness. The fourth chapter shows how emotional happiness works to stimulate all the positive activities of the individual's mind and body.

Subhara: means being easily nourished and being able to bear one's basic needs even if they are unmet. Failure to fulfill one's needs can often lead to emotional distress, resulting in states like sadness and anger. However, being mindful of this is very beneficial for emotional health.

Appakicca means not being overworked. Being overworked, whether rationally or irrationally, has a negative impact on a person's physical and mental health. It builds up mental stress and, in the long run, leads to various mental illnesses as well as physical problems. Being busy makes you angry easily and leads to a loss of joy in life. Therefore, it is important for emotional health to do one's work in a planned way and to relax when needed.

Sallahukavutti - easy living. An easy life means being satisfied with the fulfillment of one's needs. It is to train the mind not to cling to material goods, no matter how much they exist. This is an extremely difficult task. But by practicing this mental state, the individual can avoid being emotionally distressed. Therefore, achieving mental calmness is important in emotion regulation.

Santindriya means maintaining the calmness of the senses. Clinging to sensual objectives is normal human nature, but it negatively affects a person's emotional state, leading to emotional experiences such as sadness, anger, and fear. Therefore, it is important to control the sense faculties. Techniques for this purpose are taught in Buddhism. This matter has been discussed at length in the fifth chapter.

Nipaka - This means acting intelligently. The ability to make decisions according to the situation is very important in reducing emotional problems.

Appagabbha means devoid of being rude in behavior. By practicing compassion, a person's thoughts and speech become pleasant. This occurs when consciousness and wisdom are practiced, leading to the development of politeness. This politeness helps to avoid many misunderstandings in dealing with people in everyday life.

Kulesu Ananugiddho - This means non-attachment to castes. Clinging to the caste may distract from mental health. But it seems difficult to avoid this in lay life. But an intelligent person can achieve peace of mind by fulfilling

his duties and not clinging to his family unnecessarily. Practicing equanimity helps in this.

According to Leonard A. Bullen, the more you understand your emotions, the more you can control them. For example, a general knowledge of driving a car is sufficient. But in case of any emergency or if it has a technical fault, it is very important to have good knowledge about it. As such, it is very important to have a deep understanding of emotions. Emotions are awareness of bodily states under specific circumstances. Taking the example of the emotion fear, fear is caused by a frightening thought that triggers a response in the brain. It then sends a signal to the adrenal gland. Adrenaline is released into the bloodstream and affects various organs. Accordingly, the liver releases glucose for additional energy, and the heart beats faster. The eyes are dilated and the blood circulates rapidly. These changes occur because physical activity is required. This process is not only due to fear but also occurs in situations where emotions such as anger, jealousy, and anxiety arise. When this process happens constantly, the nervous system, digestive process, brain cells, etc., and the entire body organs are damaged. This has been explained in the fourth chapter. Therefore, for physical and mental health, a discipline of handling emotions is necessary. Therefore, Leonard A. Bullen has outlined three aspects of emotional discipline.⁶²

(1) Self-observation: this means observation of one's emotions. Just as Buddhism introduces analytical self-observation that individual is practiced to be aware of constant self-emotional states. (2) Controlling emotional expressions: this means controlling one's emotional expressions. One can minimize emotional influences by understanding the triggers of emotional stimuli at the initial stage. The practice of mindfulness is essentially helpful for this process. (3) Development of new values: Developing new values that can reduce the intensity of emotional responses such as fear and anger is useful in emotional discipline.

Make an effort to suppress emotions without understanding their true nature can sometimes intensify their effects. Therefore, controlling emotions requires more than superficial remedies. Therefore, the most effective method of controlling emotions is through the detailed observation method shown in Buddhism. Here is an observation made with the aim of identifying the presence of any emotion that delays the progress of the mind. It enables recognition of emotions before they become harmful. The first step in emotion regulation is to identify the emotion. The method for that is to make contemplation on that. Repression of emotions can only occur with relentless effort. Emotions like hatred and anger are known to be harmful, but even such emotions should be suppressed after proper observation.

⁶² Bullen, L. A. (2009), p. 80.

VI. CONCLUSION

There are many conflicts in the world due to uncontrolled emotions. Individuals who cannot regulate their emotions suffer themselves and make suffer others as well. Therefore, emotion regulation is necessary for the overall well-being of individuals. Buddhism clearly outlines methods and techniques for emotion regulation. Buddhism always emphasizes the importance of cultivating positive or wholesome emotions such as lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity while eliminating unwholesome or negative emotions such as anger, hatred, and animosity for the well-being of individuals. Regulation of emotion has a positive impact on the mental and physical well-being of individuals and global harmony as a whole.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INNER CULTIVATION OF PEACE AND GLOBAL HARMONY IN BUDDHISM

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Abstract:

This paper analyses the idea of cultivating inner peace for world peace by focusing upon the early *Pāli* texts and how these anticipate developments in later forms of Buddhism. It does so by analysing several key themes. I begin by analyzing the *Abhidhamma*, which provides a clear analysis of the mind and explains what contributes to a wholesome state of mind. I next consider the *Madhupiṇḍika-sutta* in which the Buddha states that his teaching is not about arguments, but about achieving a state of inner calm.

Next I consider the three main causes of suffering: physical suffering, the suffering of change, and the suffering of conditions. I use this to suggest how the transformation from cultivating inner peace for world peace needs to encounter key dilemmas in Buddhist doctrinal theory. The most prominent of these is the dichotomy between the everyday world, or mundane world (*lokiya*), and the transcendent or supramundane world (*lokuttara*). Although common in early Buddhist texts, a Buddhist theology of world peace needs to mend this dichotomy. One suggestion of this is found in the *Pāṭali Sutta*. In this *sutta* *Pāṭali* is advised by the Buddha not to choose between different truth claims, even if they are in some senses correct, but to practice the *dasa-kusala-kammaṇṇa*, the ten courses of wholesome action. He is also advised to cultivate *mettā* loving-kindness. Practicing in such a way will bring calm to his mind, and this message embodies the Buddhist idea of cultivating inner peace for world peace.

Keywords: *Mental cultivation, Buddhist psychology, Madhupiṇḍika Sutta, mundane/ supramundane, loving-kindness.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

During Vesak, Buddhists commemorate the triumph of the Buddha over greed, hatred, and delusion, as well as the potential to foster a world where discrimination is eradicated. A fundamental tenet of Buddhism is the principle of non-discrimination. Central to Buddhist teachings, and a key aspiration celebrated during Vesak, is the notion that all living beings are to be regarded as equal. This calls for the demonstration of kindness and compassion, irrespective of race, colour, or ethnicity. This attribute is referred to as 'loving-kindness,' or *mettā*, in Buddhist doctrine. The *Mettā Sutta* embodies the Buddha's profound teaching on *mettā*, or boundless loving-kindness. It articulates the qualities one must cultivate to walk the path of peace (*santipatha*), emphasizing ethical conduct, humility, and contentment as essential foundations. A person skilled in goodness (*kusala*) must be upright (*uju*), gentle (*suvaca*), and free from arrogance (*māna*), embodying simplicity and non-attachment (*nekkhamma*). The essence of *mettā* lies in the aspiration that all beings, without exception, experience ease and safety. It extends to the seen and unseen, the near and the distant, the born and the yet-to-be-born. This boundless goodwill is compared to a mother's selfless love for her only child - a love unconditional and unwavering. This imagery underscores the depth of compassion (*karuṇā*) that should pervade the practitioner's heart. True *mettā* is not passive sentiment but an active, all-encompassing force that dissolves ill-will (*vyāpāda*) and hatred (*dosa*). It is a *brahmavihāra*, a sublime dwelling, cultivated in all postures - standing, walking, sitting, and lying down. The culmination of this practice is a mind free from attachment (*taṇhā*), untethered from distorted views (*diṭṭhi*), leading to the ultimate liberation (*nibbāna*), where rebirth ceases.¹

The sentiments conveyed in these words encapsulate a significant and fundamental message regarding how Buddhists ought to engage with others, characterized by a disposition free of anger and imbued with trust and understanding. The *Mettā-sutta* is an unfailing description of the way that world peace is based upon the inner transformation of the mind. This is the cornerstone, the pivot upon which world peace finds its foundation within Buddhism. These principles are solemnly commemorated during the Vesak festival, which honours the birth, enlightenment, and ultimate liberation of the Buddha. They are an extraordinary testament to the Buddha's message of world peace.

II. TRANSFORMING THE MIND

The idea in Buddhism is that there is nothing wrong with the world, but the way we perceive the world, with greed, hatred, and delusion. Therefore, an inner transformation is required. In the wider context, there needs to be the cultivation of inner peace for world peace.

As I have suggested, in the study of Buddhism it has often been noted that

¹ Translation adapted from the Amaravati Saṅgha translation available at: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.amar.html>. Accessed 1-06.19. SN, p.143-152.

the teachings do not point to the changing of the world, but to changing our perception of it – there is nothing wrong with the world but the way we perceive the world. The problem of suffering (*dukkha*) is not ultimately to do with the world, but with the fact that people tend to grasp and become attached to all sorts of things. The world is seen with greed, hatred, and delusion.² This aspect of Buddhist teachings suggests that Buddhist doctrines should not be used to change the world, but to change the way we view the world. They should be used to lessen greed, hatred and delusion and, in so doing, solve the problem of *dukkha*. What is needed is a way of seeing that reduces and eradicates craving.³

I will use the *Abhidhamma* to explore these ideas. Throughout book three of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, an evaluation is given of certain ways of apprehending and understanding the world. In this section I would like to focus upon one aspect of what I think the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is explaining. Put simply, this is that the world can be apprehended with or without craving.⁴ There is a focus upon the mind. This focus suggests inner transformation for world peace. This aspect of Buddhist thought has been noted by Steven Collins, who has suggested that this reflects something of a dichotomising tendency within Buddhism:

Anything with conceptual or experiential content was to be assimilated to the impersonal, non-valued side of the dichotomy; since in this sphere everything was dominated by desire and grasping, anything with content became potentially graspable. Against this stood the empty unconditioned *nibbāna*, susceptible neither to conceptualising nor grasping.⁵

Buddhism is, at its core, concerned with different orders of seeing, between the graspable, and the ungraspable, between concepts and emptiness, between attachment and non-attachment, between craving and calmness. It is concerned with inner transformation, which leads to world peace. I would like to look at the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* to see how it considers this apparent dichotomy.⁶ Book three of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *Nikkhepa-kaṇḍam*, begins with the following question: “Which ‘things’” (*‘dhammas’*) I leave the term untranslated in the

² Fuller, Paul (2004). *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, p. 12.

³ Gethin, Rupert. 1997. ‘Wrong View (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) and Right View (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*) in the *Theravāda Abhidhamma*.’ In *Recent Researches in Buddhist Studies : Essays in Honour of Professor Y. Karunadasa*, ed. Bhikkhu Kuala Lumpur Dhammajoti, Asanga Tilakaratne and Kapila Abhayawansa, p. 211-229. Hong Kong: Y.Karunadasa Felicitation Committee, Colombo, Chi Ying Foundation, p. 98.

⁴ Fuller, Paul (2004). *The Notion of Diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, p. 16.

⁵ Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, p. 113.

⁶ Gethin, Rupert. 1997. ‘Wrong View (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) and Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) in the *Theravāda Abhidhamma*. In *Recent Researches in Buddhist Studies : Essays in Honour of Professor Y. Karunadasa*, ed. Bhikkhu Kuala Lumpur Dhammajoti, Asanga Tilakaratne and Kapila Abhayawansa, p. 211-229. Hong Kong: Y.Karunadasa Felicitation Committee, Colombo, Chi Ying Foundation.

following) are wholesome?

The three roots of the wholesome: (1) Absence of greed, hatred, and delusion. (2) The four ‘aggregates’ (*khandhas*) of feeling, apperception, volitional formations and consciousness when they are associated with these roots. (3) Actions of body, speech, and mind when they come from these three roots. These are wholesome *dhammas*.⁷

Regarding the *khandhas*, I take this to imply that, when they are seen in their true nature, i.e. as not-self, they are wholesome (this is *sammā-diṭṭhi*). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is charting a passage for the adaptation of the mind.

The next question asked is: “Which *dhammas* are unwholesome?”

The three roots of the unwholesome: (1) Greed, hatred, and delusion. (2) The defilements (*kilesā*) united with them. (3) The four *khandhas* of feeling, apperception, volitional formations, and consciousness when they are associated with these roots. (4) Actions of body, speech, and mind when they come from these three roots. These are unwholesome *dhammas*.⁸

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* is clearly stating that the four mental *khandhas* are unwholesome when they are associated with ‘greed’, ‘hatred’ and ‘delusion’ (*lobha, dosa, moha*).⁹ Again, the text is offering a map of the mind. It is, as it were, an instruction manual.

In this analysis, it must be remembered that in the *nikāya* and *Abhidhamma* analysis, the term *khandha* is a neutral term, but the *khandhas* can become associated with (are indeed prone to), corruption.

Primarily they are prone to give rise to the corruption of ‘wrong-view’ (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) which distorts the way things are.

Rupert Gethin has commented on the nature of the *khandhas* in the *nikāyas* and *Abhidhamma*: “The term *upādānakkhandha* signifies the general way in which the *khandhas* are bound up with *upādāna*; the simple *khandha*, universally applicable, is used in the *nikāyas* and especially the *Abhidhamma* texts as a neutral term, allowing the specific aspects of, for example, *upādāna*’s relationship to the *khandhas* to be elaborated.”¹⁰

⁷ Dhs 180, M 981: “katame dhammā kusalā? tīni kusalamūlāni: alobho adoso amoho taṃsampayutto vedanākkhandho saññākkhandho saṃkhārakkhandho viññānakkhandho, taṃ samuṭṭhānaṃ kāyakammaṃ vacīkammaṃ manokammaṃ, ime dhammā kusalā.”

⁸ Dhs 180, M 982: “katame dhammā akusalā? tīni akusalamūlāni: lobho doso moho, tadekaṭṭhā ca kilesā taṃsampayutto vedanākkhandho saññākkhandho saṃkhārakkhandho viññānakkhandho, taṃsamuṭṭhānaṃ kāyakammaṃ vacīkammaṃ manokammaṃ, ime dhammā akusalā.”

⁹ Dhs 180, M 983. The text finally defines those *dhammas* that are indeterminate (*avyākata*), which is not essential for the present discussion: “katame dhammā avyākata kusalākusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ vipākā kāmāvacarā rūpāvacarā arūpāvacarā apariyāpannā, vedanākkhandho saññākkhandho saṃkhārakkhandho viññānakkhandho, ye ca dhammā kiriyā n’ eva kusalā nākusalā na ca kammavipākā, sabbaṃ ca rūpaṃ, asaṃkhatā ca dhātu. ime dhammā avyākata.”

¹⁰ Rupert Gethin, “The Five Khandhas: Their Treatment in the Nikāyas and Early

The *Dhammasaṅgani* is using the *khandhas* in its explanation of two ways of apprehending the world, one 'wholesome' (*kusala*), and one 'unwholesome' (*akusala*). These ideas propose that the text seeks to illustrate two differing perspectives on the world, as described in Collins' dichotomy. While both perspectives observe the same reality, the one rooted in non-attachment is considered wholesome, whereas the one driven by attachment, which leads to corruption, is deemed unwholesome. The analysis is a guide to personal peace. One could state that in this particular understanding of the Buddha's teachings the entire engaged Buddhism agenda is fundamentally flawed in the sense that socially engaged Buddhism begins with the premise that suffering is not only caused by mental reactions to external events, but that external events - social, political and economic - can be the cause of suffering. For the engaged Buddhist suffering is not only psychological, to be overcome by such techniques as meditation, but finds its causes in a wide variety of factors. Political struggle can then be used as a technique to overcome suffering. I'm not suggesting that either interpretation is correct. They appear to me to both be valid and to have support from different parts of the tradition.¹¹

III. THE POINT OF THE TEACHINGS

There is a Buddhist *sutta* found in 'The Middle Length Collection', the *Majjhima nikāya*. It is titled the *Madhupīṇḍika sutta*. This title can be translated as the "honey-ball discourse". It compares the Buddha's teachings to a delicious sweet cake. This sweet cake has a calming effect on those who hear the teachings.¹² It is the cornerstone of "Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace."

In the text, the Buddha is asked what he teaches. Is it to be a way of controlling and changing the world, or is his teaching about inner peace?¹³ There is an essential message here. The Buddha, that the following sums up his *Dharma*:

I assert and proclaim such a doctrine that one does not quarrel with anyone in the world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās (great gods, one malevolent, one good), in this generation with its recluses and *brahmins* (priests), its princes and its people; such a doctrine that apperceptions or ideas no more underlie that *brahmin*, who abides detached from sense pleasures, without perplexity, remorse cut off, free from craving for any kind of being.¹⁴

3.1. Inner transformation

The idea of non-attachment has always been very influential. Even the liberating truth of the Buddha cannot be an object of attachment. This idea is

Abhidhamma, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 14 (1986), p. 35 - 53.

¹¹ Gethin, Rupert. 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. New York, Oxford University Press, p. 72.

¹² Fuller, Paul. 2021. *An Introduction to Engaged Buddhism*. London, Bloomsbury, p. 54.

¹³ Gethin, Rupert. 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 91.

¹⁴ M. I. 108.

made most clear in the *Brahmajāla-sutta* from the *Dīgha-nikāya*. In this Buddhist text, the Buddha compares his teaching to a great net. The net, like a fisherman's catch, gathers all the philosophical and religious views. However, it is not stated that his teachings are another view. The Buddha teaches that his teachings transcend all other views, and this is their unique nature. The Buddha's Dharma is the highest because it cannot become an object of craving and attachment.¹⁵ It goes beyond views. It has practical implications. It is not a set of beliefs. It forms the cornerstone of the cultivation of inner peace for world peace.¹⁶

3.2. Types of suffering

Buddhist texts speak about 3 types of suffering. There is physical suffering, the suffering of change and the suffering of conditions. This is all described in the aptly named 'Discourse on suffering' (*Dukkha-sutta*): 'Friend [...] it is said, 'suffering, suffering.' What now is suffering? 'There are, friend, these three kinds of suffering: the suffering due to pain (*dukkhadhukkhatā*), the suffering due to conditions (*sankhāradukkhatā*), the suffering due to change (*vipariṇāmadukkhatā*). These are the three kinds of suffering.'¹⁷

What do these types of suffering mean and how do they speak to the central idea of this paper? Physical pain is the most straightforward. It is the pain you feel when you touch something hot or sharp. The suffering of change is the suffering caused by the otherwise.¹⁸ There needs to be an acknowledgement of this to create an inner change. Finally, the suffering of conditions suggests an instability, and reliance on conditions. There needs to be several factors present to provide a foundation for happiness¹⁹. Once the conditions become unstable, the location of happiness is changed, and suffering enters.

3.3. Locations of suffering

I would like to follow on from one of these themes, which speaks to the central theme of this paper. This is the idea of the location of both happiness and suffering, and the ways in which the cultivation of inner peace leads to world peace.

I have outlined the traditional three roots of suffering. These are the physical suffering, the suffering of change, and the suffering of conditions. In cultivating inner peace for world peace, the location of suffering needs to be re-evaluated. This needs to take into account many factors. Most importantly, there needs to be a relocation of suffering, from the mind to the external world. A political party can be the cause of suffering; the eco-crises can be the cause

¹⁵ Gleig, Ann. 2021. 'Engaged Buddhism. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press

¹⁶ Prebish, Charles and Baumann, Martin, eds. 2002. *Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 175.

¹⁷ S. IV. 259.

¹⁸ Gethin, Rupert. 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 75.

¹⁹ Fuller, Paul. 2021. *An Introduction to Engaged Buddhism*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 32

of suffering; a multi-national company can be the cause of suffering; sexuality and gender can be the cause of suffering. There needs to be a relocation of suffering from the mind to the world.

3.4. Mundane and supramundane

Another related move is also needed. In textual Buddhism there is a marked dichotomy between the mundane world and the supra-mundane world. This is between *lokiya* and *lokuttara*. The tradition elaborates on its portrayal of the mundane (*lokiya*) world, describing it as being governed by eight 'worldly ideas': Gain, non-gain, fame, ill-fame, blame, praise, pleasure, and pain²⁰. In contrast, the supramundane world (*lokuttara*) is characterized by five supramundane faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding.²¹ The supramundane world is often seen as the domain of the Buddha's teachings, his Dharma. It represents a transcendent realm within the religious, Buddhist worldview. Traditional Buddhism maintains a distinct separation between these two realms, with activities of one realm remaining separate from those of the other. Importantly, worldly suffering, of the 3 types I've evaluated, belongs to the mundane world, while Buddhism is situated in the supramundane world. My suggestion for this paper is that there needs to be a mending of the dichotomy for inner peace to transform into world peace.

3.5. The *Pāṭali-sutta*: Cultivating inner peace for world peace

Certain texts in the early Buddhist Canon could be understood as offering agendas for cultivating world peace. The *Pāṭali-sutta*²² from the *Samyutta-nikāya*²³ is one such text. This *sutta* is significant because it does not support right-views which are usually prescribed. I think this points to the correct understanding of right-view. Right-view is not assent to a proposition, but a way of seeing that goes beyond doubt, calms the mind and leads to wholesome action. This has important implications for engaged Buddhism. Wholesome action, so central to the teachings of Buddhism, clearly forms the basis of engaged Buddhism. Action Dharma is a term that has been used to describe engaged Buddhism.²⁴

As I shall suggest, the ten wholesome courses of action which are the focus of the *Pāṭali-sutta*, could be taken as the central idea of cultivating world peace. Indeed, in this text we have the doctrine of karma brought into the service of world peace.²⁵ Karma, in this context, is not a justification for inequalities in society, as it can be in matters of gender and sexuality. Right-action (*sammā-kammanta*), usually understood as refraining from harming living creatures,

²⁰ A. IV. 157; Nett: 863.

²¹ S. V. 193; Nett: 865.

²² S. IV. 340 – 58.

²³ Paul Fuller (2004). *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, p. 124 – 6.

²⁴ Queen, Prebish and Keown, 2003.

²⁵ Paul Fuller (2004). *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, p. 240.

from taking what is not given and sexual misconduct,²⁶ shapes involvement in the world. It illustrates how karma is a central theme of engaged Buddhism.²⁷

The second half of this *sutta* follows a conversation between Pāṭali and the Buddha. Pāṭali owns a guesthouse (or an ancient Indian variety of one) where various people come to stay. Pāṭali informs the Buddha that on certain occasions, ascetics and brahmins stay there. He recalls one particular occasion when 'four teachers holding different views (*ditṭhi*) following different systems' came to stay. Pāṭali then recounts how each teacher taught their own religious and philosophical ideas.

The first teacher held the view of nihilism (S. IV. 348), the wrong view that actions do not have consequences. We already know that it is a wrong-view, because to deny the law of karma is the primary type of wrong-view in the *Pāli* Canon. The second teacher held the view of affirmation (S. IV. 348-9), the right-view that actions do have consequences. This view affirms the existence of karma, that all actions have a consequence. Therefore it is a right-view. The third teacher held the view of non-doing (S. IV. 349), the wrong-view that if we act in an unwholesome way, for example, kill living beings, no wrong is done by the performer of these actions. This is another wrong view. And the fourth, the view that there is doing,²⁸ the right-view that if we act in a unwholesome way, for example, kill living beings, wrong is done by the performer of these actions. Again, this is a right-view.²⁹

All of these views are to do with actions (karma) and describe wholesome and unwholesome actions. Two of them are wrong-views, denying the law of karma and that unwholesome actions will have consequences. Two of them are right-views, those that affirm that actions have consequences, and that propose that unwholesome actions will have consequences.³⁰

On hearing these different views, Pāṭali explains to the Buddha that he has doubt and uncertainty, not knowing which recluse and brahmin was speaking truth and which was speaking falsehood.³¹ He wants the Buddha to simply explain which views are wrong and those that are right. This should be simple for the Buddha to answer. The Buddha should respond that two of the ascetics and

²⁶ Gethin (1998), p. 81.

²⁷ Paul Fuller (2004). *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism. One could argue against the interpretation of these texts presented here, suggesting that the early writings do not explicitly advocate for engaged Buddhism. Instead, they may simply emphasize the importance of understanding and adapting the nature of the mind. While this is a valid perspective, an alternative, more optimistic interpretation is that these texts imply mental transformation as a catalyst for social change.

²⁸ S. IV. 349. p. 50.

²⁹ Paul Fuller (2004). *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, p. 210.

³⁰ Gethin, Rupert (1998). *The Foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 135.

³¹ S. IV. 350.

brahmins are speaking the truth – those who explain the right-views upholding karma and the idea that performing wholesome and unwholesome actions will lead to verifiable results, in this life or the next. A Buddha would want to help Pāṭali, and their conversation should conclude at this point.³² However, the Buddha explains that one of his followers should change their state of mind, and then act. In many ways he is proposing an inner and outer transformation. The Buddha explains to Pāṭali precisely what he should do:

- (1) Abandoning the killing of living beings; abstaining therefrom,
- (2) abandoning the taking of what is not given, abstaining therefrom,
- (3) abandoning misconduct in sensual pleasure, (4) abandoning false speech. (5) malicious speech. (6) harsh speech. (7) gossip, abstaining therefrom, (8) abandoning covetousness, he is no more covetous, (9) abandoning malevolence and hatred, his heart becomes free from ill will, (10) abandoning wrong-view, he becomes one of right-view.³³

The Buddha has replied to Pāṭali by offering a path of action as an antidote to doubt and uncertainty. Don't bother with intellectual propositions, he seems to be saying, do something, act, be engaged, and the Buddhist path will give you answers.³⁴ Technically, in the language of early Buddhism, the Buddha has suggested to Pāṭali that he abandons the ten unwholesome courses of action and adopts the ten wholesome courses of action.³⁵ The follower of the Buddha knows what is unwholesome, what will lead to a negative mental state, and what is wholesome, what will lead to a positive mental state. By practicing in this way the follower of the Buddha is freed from covetousness, malevolence, not bewildered, but attentive, and concentrated, with a mind full of loving-kindness (*mettā*).

That person then abides (or meditates) suffusing the whole world with a mind possessed of loving-kindness.³⁶ The idea of loving-kindness is essential to world peace. In the present discussion, it overcomes intellectual doubt and promotes a positive course of action. It is a call to social activism.³⁷

I consider this teaching about views to be essential to transforming the mind for world peace. This *sutta* is inline with the idea of transforming the mind for world peace, cultivating inner peace for world peace.

IV. CONCLUSION

³² Gethin, Rupert. 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 75.

³³ S. IV. p. 350 – 352.

³⁴ Batchelor, Stephen (2017). *Secular Buddhism: Imagining the Dharma in an Uncertain World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 22.

³⁵ Spiro, Melford. E. (1982). *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes*. 2nd. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 45.

³⁶ S. IV. 351.

³⁷ Paul Fuller (2004). *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism, p. 20.

There is a psychological problem involved in holding and obstinately clinging to views. This psychological problem is not only a hindrance to more passive and ascetic forms of Buddhist practice. It is emphasised in engaged Buddhism. For example, in the study of Buddhism it has often been noted that the teachings do not point to the changing of the world, but to the changing of our perception of it - there is nothing wrong with the world, but with the way we perceive the world. The problem of 'suffering' (*dukkha*) is not ultimately to do with the world, but with the fact that people tend to grasp and become attached to all sorts of things. The world is seen with greed, hatred, and delusion. This aspect of Buddhist teaching suggests that Buddhist doctrines should not be used to change the world, but to change the way we view the world. They should be used to lessen greed, hatred and delusion and, in so doing, solve the problem of *dukkha*. What is needed is a way of 'seeing' that eradicates craving. The danger for the engaged Buddhist is that political conviction is often betrayed by rigid opinions leading to suffering.³⁸

However, as has been shown, the attitude of the holder of right-view is indicative of a course of action that leads to the abandonment of all views – precisely this is right-view. But to achieve right-view it is essential to act under the insight which it describes: by abandoning greed, hatred, and delusion. The problem of attachment to views is central to Buddhist political and social engagement. Rather than advocating a set agenda in its political engagement, it seems to me that the distinctiveness of Buddhism is precisely to do with seeing a danger with strict and immovable standpoints. On a closer analysis, it is action, as is often the case in Indian and Buddhist philosophy, which should be the object of religious contemplation. Views focus upon cognitive actions, the correct and incorrect grasping of Buddhist doctrines, and in turn are how philosophically complex issues are seen in their correct context.

Many issues, both in the wider Buddhist context, and in the more specific study of world peace are brought into sharp focus with our consideration of views and their problematic nature in Buddhism. Right-view is suggestive of a mindful and non-attached attitude which is taken into the world to encounter issues in politics, ecology, gender and identity.³⁹ It is often our greed for specific views, and our hatred of our opponent's opinions, that lead to conflict and delusion. Therefore, a mindful reflection on our views and opinions is essential for the practice of engaged Buddhism. Views inhibit both personal and social transformation. From the most pervasive view, which proposes that there is an individual, unconditioned and permanent self,⁴⁰ to views which propose a particular truth, ideology, gender or race, Buddhist teachings on views are one of the philosophical foundations of engaged Buddhism. Therefore, this forms one of the cornerstones of "Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace."

³⁸ Paul Fuller (2021). *An Introduction to Engaged Buddhism*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 198.

³⁹ Paul Fuller (2021). *An Introduction to Engaged Buddhism*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 201.

⁴⁰ Fuller (2004), p. 26 - 28.

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THE JOURNEY OF MINDFULNESS TO THE WEST: ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION FOR A COMPASSIONATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Abstract:

‘Mindfulness’ is the English translation used by the 19th-century Western Buddhist scholar Rhys Davids (1843 - 1922) for the Pali/ Sanskrit word ‘Sati’ discussed in detail in the ancient Buddhist texts. It is currently a billion-dollar industry in the USA, and the British Parliament has recommended mindfulness for four key areas as a useful tool: the National Health Service (NHS), the Criminal Justice System, Education, and Workplace settings¹. Increased levels of mental health and well-being issues such as work fatigue, stress, anxiety, and depression have made mindfulness a popular practice. What is even more attractive is that this ancient Buddhist practice does not demand any religious affiliation of any sort, but whether one has a religious adherence or not, both those segments of society with faith and no faith can equally practice mindfulness without any sectarian beliefs. For these reasons and more, Mindfulness is being widely practiced in the West mostly as a secular practice, sans any religious affiliation. In this paper, we investigate this journey of mindfulness in the West with particular attention to its role in education and its potential in building a compassionate future. In doing so, we will assess its true strengths in creating a more holistic and compassionate society.

Keywords: *Mindfulness (sati), contemporary Western world, Buddhist practice, therapy and counselling, ethics, spirituality and current trends.*

¹ The Mindfulness Initiative: <http://www.themindfulnessinitiative.org>

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper explores how the ancient Buddhist practice of Mindfulness has been modified to suit the Western demands of mental health and wellbeing and its overall impact on Western society.

The recent upsurge of interest in mindfulness across the world has generated much interest in the subject. Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn's pioneering work that he started in 1970's in America which became famous as '**Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction**' (**MBSR**) has given rise to many such programmes, e.g., (MBCT) Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy established by Oxford Mindfulness Centre and Mindfulness-based Attention Training (MBAT) by Dr Amishi Jha and many others. Such pilot programmes supported by academic research have led mindfulness into a vibrant area of study and research, establishing university academic programmes, therapeutic interventions, and even national-level movements and groups such as the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in the British Parliament.

Though no one claims Mindfulness to be a panacea for all mental health and wellbeing issues, its relative simplicity, the self-help nature of developing a regular practice, and life-changing stories of people who make it a daily practice have significantly boosted Mindfulness in all sectors. Increased levels of stress and anxiety, particularly in the post-pandemic era exacerbated by the high cost of living, unacceptable levels of use of anti-depressants across the globe, and other mental health and wellbeing issues have turned people to Mindfulness as a therapeutic healer and a useful tool.

What has also been reassuring is its ancient and historic roots in the Buddhist tradition, which has persisted for 2500 years in promoting spiritual health and can easily be translated into religious/spiritual practices in other faith traditions too: i.e., meditation, contemplation, prayer, reflection, and the like.

As Mindfulness is becoming more and more popular and mainstream in clinical/therapeutic/counselling settings, some have started to raise some legitimate questions as to the validity and authenticity of contemporary forms of Mindfulness, especially when it is increasingly used to "fix" things taken out of its Buddhist roots. Questions are also being asked as to its appropriateness in using and promoting such mundane activities as empowering corporate sector businesses, profiteering industries, developing resilience and military effectiveness by defence forces, and the like.

As no founder or expert on contemporary mindfulness has ever denied that all forms of mindfulness must be based on moral and ethical foundations, no one denies the fact that one could use mindfulness practice for very subjective and mundane purposes as well. One way to win this argument is to say that developing mindfulness is always "wholesome" but what it is used for is one's own business!"

Such a counter argument is also not without problems since a wholesome and noble ancient Buddhist practice found in the 'Eight-Fold Noble Path' is being used to advance lucrative businesses and questionable enterprises.

Does it mean contemporary mindfulness is a deviation from its original form? What similarities, differences are there between contemporary and traditional mindfulness, if any?

By way of finding answers to these questions, this paper aims to explore the original form of Mindfulness discussed in Buddhism and compare it with the contemporary Mindfulness movement. I will argue that the moral/ethical questions raised against the contemporary Mindfulness stems from its 'restrictive' and too 'mechanistic' understanding and practices, which can be easily avoided by a more holistic and comprehensive approach to this useful concept. This paper thus proposes to provide a comprehensive understanding of Buddhist practice and how the Buddha envisaged the path to be developed with canonical evidence and illustrations.

II. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ISSUES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

As the Oxford Mindfulness Centre (OMC) has pointed out in their research unit,² over 390 million people (pre-covid) in the world are on antidepressants today. After COVID-19 and its impact on mental health and well-being, this number must be much higher. The main causes for this are the fast-paced lifestyles, work fatigue, and sensory disconnect. It has already been reported that dementia has taken over as the number one killer, from heart disease, which essentially means that we tend to lose our minds even before our hearts. These states of affairs make us quite vulnerable to mental health issues, and the medication in these cases is not the solution for various reasons. Mindfulness has been found to be an attractive option in the modern world today because of its simplicity, absence of side effects, and the self-help nature of its application. The relevance and demand for mindfulness practice against this background are quite apparent.

III. TWO WINGS OF THE BUDDHA DHAMMA

Although the main aim of Buddhism is to take one to a transcendent goal of emancipation (*nibbāna*), which transcends the world and worldly phenomena, Buddha has clearly understood that one must be guided from where one is at present rather than taking one straight to a nibbanic path. Therefore, Buddha dhamma involves two aspects of dhamma: *worldly* dhamma (*lokiya*), a comprehensive guide as to how to live this life, and dhamma beyond the world (*lokuttara*), which signifies the crossover and letting go of the world. This dichotomy is found in every aspect of dhamma³ as the Buddha clearly states: 'right view' is of two types, one which includes 'defiling tendencies' (*sāsavā*), merit-making (*puñña-bhāgiyā*), includes karmic effects (*upadhi-vepakkhā*). The other 'right view' which is 'free from defiling tendencies' (*anāsavā*), world transcending (*lokuttarā*), on the path to nibbana (*magga-anga*). The three-fold discipline: *sīla* (virtue), *samādhi* (serenity), and *pañña*, therefore, are important steps in this regard.

² <http://oxfordmindfulness.org>

³ Maha Chattarisaka Sutta MN117.

The entire Buddha sāsana follows this dichotomy of teaching, and here we discuss its impact on mindfulness. We will show that Mindfulness has two levels to it, mindfulness of the world and worldly objects, and once one establishes mindfulness, it becomes a ‘clear insight’ with which to cut the thin whale of ignorance. These two levels may be compared to the traditional division in meditation known as ‘samatha’ and ‘vipassana’.

3.1. Two types of mindfulness

Following the ‘two wings of dhamma’ discussed above, one could see the two aspects of mindfulness illustrated in the teachings. In the Four Foundations of Mindfulness Sutta (satipatthana Sutta) first part deals with this aspect of ‘establishing mindfulness on body (kaya), feelings (vedanā), mind (citta) and phenomena (dhamma).

3.1.1. Worldly mindfulness (*sati patṭāna*)

One is not able to establish world-transcending mindfulness (lokuttara-sati) without establishing mindfulness of the world (lokiya-sati). In other words, if one’s mind is too scattered, one is overcome by one’s thoughts and one naturally falls into the ‘auto-pilot’ mind which is destructive and which can lead one to more and more stress, anxiety, and depression. It is therefore vitally important that one trains one’s mind before one can use it for a useful purpose. This training involves establishing one’s mind on worldly objects, which I call here ‘worldly mindfulness’. This form of mindfulness practice can best be described as ‘samatha practice’, the aim of which is to achieve ‘one pointedness’ of the mind, which can also lead to higher levels of calmness (samadhi) and absorptions (dhyāna). This practice is ‘mechanistic’ and involves greater expectations of mind training towards higher happiness in the world rather than mind transcending to achieve nibbānic peace. Samatha practice, therefore, is a means to an end rather than being the end in itself.

Just by looking at this ‘worldly mindfulness’, one could argue that it is a deviation from the main goal of Buddhism. This tension is always there, even in the Buddhist tradition, asking the question of what is the role of ‘samatha’ or ‘samadhi’?

If one makes ‘samatha/samadhi’ or ‘jhana’ the final goal of the practice, then one can argue that it does not amount to taking Buddha Dhamma seriously. However, one cannot preclude this step either, since it forms a part of the journey.

The evidence for this comes from the Buddha’s description of his journey:

“And what is the development of concentration that, when developed and pursued, leads to a pleasant abiding in the here and now? There is the case where a monk - quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful qualities enters and remains in the first Jhana ... this is the development of concentration that, when developed and pursued leads to a pleasant abiding in the here and now” ... (AN 4: 41)

The calm, concentrated mind sees things as they are (samahito bhikkhu yatha bhutam pajanati) (SN 46)

The benefits of *Samatha/samādhi* cannot be overemphasised since it is an essential aspect to developing insight. Without *Samatha/samādhi*, developing ‘insight’ is almost impossible. This is clearly shown in the *satipatṭhana sutta*.

In the four foundations of mindfulness, body, feelings, mind, and dhamma, the body contemplation has 6 sections to it.

- 3.1.2. Mindfulness of breathing (*anāpāna pabba*)
- 3.1.3. Mindfulness of body postures (*iriyāpatha pabba*)
- 3.1.4. Mindfulness of elements (*dhātumanasikāra panna*)
- 3.1.5. Mindfulness of nine-body states (*navasīvatika pabba*)
- 3.1.6. Mindfulness of the foulness of the body (*asubha pabba*)
- 3.1.7. Mindfulness of knowing (*sampajañña pabba*)

In all these 6 ‘pubbas’ body is recognised, and bodily objects such as breath, movements and postures of the body, elements of the body, different states of the body, and foulness of different parts of the body have become the ‘objects’ of meditation.

With regards to feelings, pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feelings are the focus of meditation. In the case of mind, different states of mind have been the objects of meditation, and with regards to dhammas, the five hindrances, four noble truths, and otherworldly phenomena have been taken to be the objects. What is common to all these is that the mindfulness is placed on an object by placing or establishing mindfulness on and of the object. Thus, in this way, the *Samatha/samādhi* is an essential part of the mindfulness practice. It is after developing ‘mindfulness on the object’, which I called ‘worldly mindfulness’, that the Buddha introduces the next stage of mindfulness, which is ‘insight practice’:

“In this way, regarding the body he abides contemplating the body internally, or he abides contemplating the body externally, or abides contemplating the body internally and externally. He abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or he abides contemplating the nature of passing away in the body. Mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and continuous mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world”. That is how regarding the body he abides, contemplating the body.

IV. MINDFULNESS BEYOND THE WORLD (*UPATṬHITA SATI*)

What is described above, of course, is a mindfulness beyond the world and one that takes one ‘out of the world’. The main characteristics of this form of mindfulness are that it is an ‘insight’, ‘wisdom’ of the world and beyond, and once one has attained this, it becomes the default position of the mind.

4.1. ‘Restrictive’ and ‘mechanistic’ understanding of mindfulness

The contemporary mindfulness movement has enormous potential in reaching out to people without unnecessary hurdles such as cultural or religious affiliations, which indeed is a good thing. It also enables one to accommodate many human activities, whether they are religious/cultural/denominational or

not, under a broader tent of ‘attention training’, ‘collecting the rambling mind’ into ‘one pointedness’, achieving concentration and increased awareness and clarity of mind to some extent. A wandering mind and getting wrapped in a vicious cycle of thoughts indeed is the enemy of the mind. Sensory disconnect is a major problem in the increasing multi-tasking world of ours today. Looking without seeing, listening without hearing, eating without tasting, walking about without feeling the feet on the ground has become all too familiar human activity of the modern world of ours today. In such a context, the biggest role of Mindfulness is to bring the mind to where the body is. At least to be mindful that ‘I am here’, ‘you are there’ and the world is around us! This certainly is ONLY the start of a journey.

This, however, shouldn’t be the ‘be-all and end-all’ of Mindfulness. If we were to reduce mindfulness to this, it would be a ‘restrictive’ and ‘mechanistic’ view of Mindfulness, which has been a serious practice in Buddhist tradition for generations. Isn’t it, therefore, useful and relevant to learn and understand Mindfulness as it is practiced in the traditional Buddhist context? That certainly will enrich our understanding and practice of Mindfulness.

4.2. The scope of mindfulness in Buddhism

In Buddhism, Mindfulness appears 8 times in the 37 factors of enlightenment (*bodhi-pakkhiya dhamma*, MN118). The term ‘Mindfulness’ was the translation given by Rhys Davids (1921-5) in the early 19th Century to the Pali term ‘sati’ in Buddhism.

4.3. Wholesomeness (*kusala*)

The Buddhist concept of ‘sati’ is always a wholesome (*kusala*) mental quality that is accompanied by wisdom. In the texts, the term is used as a couplet: ‘*sati-sampajañña*’ (mindfulness with insight). *Satimā sampajāno* ‘one who is mindful and insightful, geared towards generating wisdom and insight. ‘Mindful insight’ is thus a part of a gradual training in Buddhist practice rather than a finite ‘singleton’ mental state.

V. REMEMBERING AN INSIGHTFUL REALISATION

What is also of interest is the term ‘*sati-sampajañña*’ has several different functions in the path to enlightenment. The term ‘*sati*’ (*smṛti* in skt.) means ‘keeping to memory’, remembering (an experience reached through wisdom/insight). In the commentarial literature, ‘sati’ is defined as remembering some insightful presence that was achieved in a moment of flash (*cira katam’pi cira bhāsita’pi saritā anussaritā* = *sati*, remembering, bringing into memory of something that was done or said a while ago). This refers to what we often called a ‘light-bulb’ moment, a moment in which we came to realise something through wisdom/insight, something precious that we hadn’t realised before.

5.1. Holistic limb of the path

Characterising ‘sati’ Mindfulness as some moment of realisation, awakening takes Mindfulness to a different height. This is why Mindfulness becomes the very first stage of the seven-stepped path to enlightenment (*sati sambojjhanga*) in the Buddhist texts.

5.2. Mindfulness ‘in’ and ‘out’ of the mind

In trying to understand the journey of Mindfulness, the following sutta is an important one:

At Sāvatthi, the Brahman Unnābha said to the Buddha: “There are these five sense faculties, good Gotama, of different spheres, different action, and they do not share in each other’s sphere of action. Which five? The sense of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. As these five faculties are of different scope and range and do not share in each other’s sphere of action, what is their resort, and who profits from their combined activity?”

“There are, Brahman, these five sense-faculties... which do not share in each other’s sphere of action. **Mind is their resort**, and it is mind that profits from their combined activity.”

“But, good Gotama, **what is mind’s resort?**

Mind’s resort, Brahman, is mindfulness.

Then, good Gotama, **what is the resort of mindfulness?**

The resort of mindfulness, Brahman, is liberation (ability to let go).

Then, good Gotama, what is the resort of liberation?

The resort of liberation is Nibbaana.

Then, good Gotama, what is the resort of Nibbaana?”

“That question goes too far, Brahman. No answer can encompass it. The aim of the holy life, Brahman, is immersion in Nibbaana; it has Nibbaana for its end, Nibbaana for its conclusion.”

(SN: 48:42, Translation by Maurice O’Connell Walshe 2009)

The relevance of the above conversation is that Mindfulness ideally lies “outside” of the Mind rather than inside. Mindfulness thus can penetrate the very mind itself as it is detailed in the famous Foundations of Mindfulness Sutta (*Satipatthana Sutta*, MN:10)

What this essentially means is that one starts Mindfulness practice within (inside) the mind, but when the faculty of insight is aroused ‘wisdom/insight’ faculty takes over. The practice of Mindfulness thus needs to be understood as a path, a journey rather a ‘finite’ state.

VI. MINDFULNESS, MINDFULNESS MEDITATION, AND MINDFULNESS MEDITATION PATH

Further evidence to the fact that traditional Mindfulness founded in Buddhism is a holistic journey is found in the *Vibhanga Sutta* as discussed below:

“Bhikkhus, I will teach you the **establishment of mindfulness**, and the **development of the establishment of Mindfulness**, and the **way leading to the development of the establishment of Mindfulness**. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say.”

“And what, bhikkhus, is the establishment of mindfulness? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly

comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regards to the world. He dwells contemplating the feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... phenomena in phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. This is called the establishment of mindfulness.”

“And what, bhikkus, is the development of the establishment of mindfulness? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the nature of originating in the body; he dwells contemplating the nature of vanishing in the body; he dwells contemplating the nature of originating and vanishing in the body – ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating the nature of originating in feelings ... he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in mind ... he dwells contemplating the nature of the origination in mind ... he dwells contemplating the nature of origination in phenomena; he dwells contemplating the nature of origination and vanishing in phenomena – ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure regarding the world. This is called the development (bhavana) of the establishment of mindfulness.”

“And what. Bhikkhus, is the way leading to the development of the establishment of mindfulness? It is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is right view ... right concentration. This is called the way leading to the development of the establishment of mindfulness.” (SN.47: 40)

VII. MINDFULNESS AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION

From what we have discussed so far, ‘worldly mindfulness’ is a ‘mind training tool’, and that is a useful tool in training. When mindfulness becomes a training tool, it becomes a secular practice devoid of any faith or belief attached to it. The Western world is quite content and comfortable to undertake ‘training tools’, especially mind training purposes, since they are quite few and far between. The real success of the ‘mindfulness movement’ in the West is due to this, and therefore, we find increasing demand for mindfulness in Western society. What is also heartening to note is that there seems to be a significant level of empathy towards the mental health and wellbeing needs of people, and even the government departments not only recognise mindfulness as a therapeutic tool but also actively prescribe and facilitate mindfulness in many areas of service. This trend has been building a significant momentum past several decades and continues to grow at present as well.

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WORLD PEACE THROUGH INNER PEACE - THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF MEDITATION

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Abstract:

This paper presents a framework for incorporating Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) into mathematics instruction through the innovative application of crossword puzzles. The study addresses the declining interest in mathematics among students and proposes engaging pedagogical strategies to foster enthusiasm and deep understanding. Using puzzles designed with specific mathematical content, the research evaluates students' engagement, critical thinking, and creativity in solving problems. The implementation among upper secondary students demonstrates improved motivation and enhanced comprehension of mathematical concepts. This approach not only promotes higher-order thinking skills but also makes mathematics learning more interactive and enjoyable. The study underscores the value of non-traditional methods in modern education to bridge gaps in students' cognitive engagement with mathematics.

Keywords: *mathematics education, critical thinking, creative thinking, crossword puzzles, pedagogical strategies, student engagement, problem-solving, higher-order thinking.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The search for inner peace and happiness has been a central theme in human history, yet it remains elusive for many. Despite advances in science, technology, and society, individuals and communities continue to suffer. Natural disasters, wars, political instability, economic crises, and personal challenges such as work pressures, financial struggles, and strained relationships in family contribute to a pervasive sense of anxiety and distress.

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In recent times, the world has witnessed significant turmoil and suffering. Ongoing wars and conflicts in the Middle East, particularly in Syria and the Gaza/ West Bank region, Ukraine, and other parts of the World, have led to the immense loss of lives, hardships, and the displacement of thousands of people. The civil unrest in Myanmar has further exacerbated the plight of its citizens, especially amongst its ethnic minorities, causing widespread fear and instability. Additionally, natural disasters such as floodings, earthquakes, and the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles have destroyed homes and livelihoods, leaving many homeless and in distress. These events highlight the urgent need for inner peace and resilience in the face of global challenges.

In such a turbulent world, achieving peace – both personal and global – can seem impossible. Yet meditation, a practice as ancient as humanity's quest for meaning, emerges as a universal solution. Its ability to foster inner calm and balance on an individual level creates ripples of harmony that extend outward, eventually catalyzing societal, communal, and global peace.

This paper examines how meditation, by enabling individuals to find inner peace, can lay the foundation for achieving global harmony and fostering sustainable development.

II. INNER PEACE

Inner peace, or “*Passaddhi*” in Pali, is a state of mental and spiritual harmony where one is free from turmoil and discord. It is not merely the absence of stress and anxiety but the presence of mindfulness, contentment, and a deep-seated sense of serenity. Achieving inner peace leads to profound happiness, cultivated wisdom, and a calm, centered perspective on life. Inner Peace or “*Passaddhi*” (Pali) in Buddhist teachings refers to tranquility or calmness of both body and mind. It is one of the “Seven Factors of Enlightenment” (*Satta Bojjaṅga*) and plays a crucial role in meditation practice.

As stated in the *Samyutta Nikaya*:

“For one who is tranquil in body and happy, the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind is concentrated, things become manifest as they truly are” (SN 46.3)

2.1. The timeless quest for inner peace

The teachings of the Buddha provide timeless insights into humanity's quest for peace and liberation. During his search for liberation from suffering and enlightenment, the Lord Buddha tried various methodologies, including engaging in a painstaking process of self-mortification. However, this did not lead him to the supreme peace he sought. After profound contemplation, he realized that this was not the path to relieve him from distress and gave up this practice.

Eventually, he considered the Middle Way – a path not dependent on extremes and enduring austerities – as the method of practice to attain liberation and enlightenment. On the day of his enlightenment, Prince Siddhartha ate some milk-rice offered by the maiden Sujātā, which restored his health and radiance. He received eight sheaves of grass from the brahmin Sotthiya and laid them down beneath a Bodhi tree. Sitting cross-legged, he resolved:

“For however long it takes for me to attain enlightenment, even if my body should shrivel and die leaving only skin, sinew, and bone, I will not leave this meditation seat, not moving from this position even if my life should come to an end”- *Majjhima Nikaya - Mahasaccaka Sutta (MN 36)*.

During meditation on that full moon day, he attained the “*Dhammakaya*” – the body of Enlightenment of all Buddhas, Inner Peace, and experienced immense happiness.

This resolution was made at Bodhgaya, just before the Buddha’s enlightenment, demonstrating his unwavering determination to achieve complete awakening.

The moral of the story is that the search for Inner Peace and attaining the *Dhammakaya* is internal within us. Inner Peace cannot be found outside of our body.

2.2. Meditation: A pathway to attaining inner peace

Meditation offers a pathway to focus, calm, and eventually still the mind, leading to the attainment of inner peace. It empowers individuals to reclaim control of their minds, transforming them into sources of peace, wisdom, compassion, and strength. Scientific studies confirm that meditation reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, improves sleep, and strengthens immunity. It also cultivates emotional intelligence, enhancing empathy, gratitude, and compassion.

The Mind, as referred to in Buddhist scriptures, is not an organ but can be compared to a form of energy like light, which has its brightness and aura.

Meditation (*Bhavana*) is the cultivation and development of Body and Mind, which can be considered as a transformative practice that stills the mind with clarity, focus, empathy, and impartiality. It addresses one of the most profound truths about human experience:

“You have a mind, but you are not the boss of your mind. Often, your mind is the boss of you.”

The mind is our most valuable asset. It has the power to make us happy or miserable, energized or lifeless, successful or broken. The quality of our thoughts directly influences the quality of our life. Meditation empowers us to reclaim control of this invaluable resource, transforming it into a source of peace, wisdom, compassion, and strength.

Meditation can be transformative in many ways, including:

- Mental health and mental purification

Scientific studies confirm that meditation reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, improves sleep, and strengthens immunity. Calming the mind, it also alleviates anxiety and depression, fostering mental clarity and resilience. Moreover, meditation aids in mental purification, reducing anger, greed, and delusion while cultivating wholesome mental states and developing equanimity.

- Leads to a clear understanding of cause and effect (The Law of *Karma*)

The Law of Karma, a fundamental belief in Buddhism, posits that our actions, whether physical, verbal, or mental, have consequences that shape our present and future experiences. Meditation facilitates a clear understanding of this cause-and-effect relationship by fostering mindfulness and introspection. As individuals become more aware of their actions and their repercussions, they are more likely to engage in positive behaviors that contribute to their well-being and reduce suffering.

- Recognition of the three characteristics of existence (*Tilakkhaṇa*)

Meditation also aids in recognizing the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhaṇa*): impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). Through continuous practice, meditators gain insight into the transient nature of all phenomena, understanding that everything is subject to change and nothing remains permanent. This realization helps in accepting life's uncertainties and reducing attachment and aversion, which are the root causes of suffering. Furthermore, by comprehending the concept of non-self, individuals can transcend the ego and experience a sense of unity with all beings.

- Liberation from sufferings

The ultimate goal of meditation is the liberation from suffering (*dukkha*) and the attainment of Nirvana. By cultivating mindfulness, wisdom, and compassion, meditators can overcome the defilements of the mind, such as greed, hatred, and delusion. This inner purification leads to a profound sense of peace and freedom, eventually releasing individuals from the cycle of birth and rebirth (*samsara*) and paving the way for spiritual enlightenment.

- Better stress management and resilience

Meditation reduces stress and increases resilience, enabling individuals to manage life's challenges with greater ease and composure. It enhances emotional balance, helping to navigate difficult situations without being overwhelmed.

- Emotional intelligence and compassion

Meditation cultivates emotional intelligence, improving self-awareness and empathy. It reduces tendencies toward anger, jealousy, hatred, and fear while enhancing gratitude and compassion. These qualities enrich relationships and create a harmonious social environment.

- Enhanced performance and focus

By training the mind to focus on a single point, meditation improves concentration, mindfulness, and decision-making, leading to better outcomes in personal and professional life.

- Blissfulness and fulfillment

Meditation fosters self-awareness, helping individuals transcend superficial concerns and connect with deeper values. This connection brings a sense of purpose, contentment, and joy.

- Pathway to spiritual attainment and growth

In Buddhism, through deep Meditation, one may achieve the 4 levels of "*Jhana*" (One Pointedness or Meditative Absorption - a very still, focused, and

stable state of concentration). To attain the “*Jhanas*”, the Meditator must begin by eliminating the unwholesome mental states of the 5 hindrances (*Pancanivarana*): sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, worry and doubts. Further continuous practice shall eventually lead to spiritual growth and enlightenment.

This attainment grants the meditator supreme bliss, profound happiness, enhanced wisdom, mindfulness, and compassion, transforming them into noble, ethical individuals worthy of respect comparable to a “*Bodhisattva*” (path towards Buddhahood).

III. ACHIEVING MINDFULNESS

In contemporary times, it has never been more crucial for individuals to be mindful of the consequences of their actions. Genuine mindfulness would eliminate conflicts by fostering love and respect for both our neighbours and our planet, thereby promoting self-respect and self-love.

We aim to instill mindfulness and self-awareness in our children, which often stems from an inherent sense of right and wrong. This is evident in our daily activities. For instance, we might encourage children to engage in positive actions such as picking up discarded trash and disposing of it correctly, whether at home or school. These seemingly simple actions are fundamental in developing a sense of responsibility towards ourselves and our environment. Each lesson learned through these actions serves as a reflection on the cause and effect of our behavior. If we neglect to dispose of litter properly, it leads to environmental degradation that we must then endure.

As teenagers or adults, we may participate in activities such as replanting trees or establishing national parks and protected areas. These actions reflect our thought processes and awareness of the impact of our decisions, demonstrating our level of mindfulness and responsibility.

Undoubtedly, meditation is the most effective method for achieving mindfulness. Meditation is an instinctive practice that begins at birth and continues to develop throughout life. Some meditation skills are innate, while others are acquired through guidance, study, self-discipline, and practice.

Meditation involves cultivating a peaceful state of mind and body; consistent practice enhances inner peace. Additionally, meditation offers medicinal benefits by inducing a state of equilibrium between intellect and emotions. Many problems arise from our inability to distinguish material progress from quality of life. Thus, meditation not only boosts spiritual well-being but also improves physical health by mitigating stress-related ailments. With each session, meditation promotes progressive personal growth.

In Buddhism, this is referred to as the “Path to Enlightenment,” which can also be understood as the journey toward comprehending the true nature of all experiences.

The *Kayagatasati Sutta* (MN 119) describes meditation for mindfulness:

“And how, monks, is mindfulness of the body developed and cultivated to bring great benefit?”

Buddhist scriptures like the *Kayagatasati Sutta*, *Satipatthana Sutta*, *Anapassati Sutta*, and the *Samyutta Nikaya* consistently present meditation (*jhāna*, *samādhi*, *bhāvanā*) as an essential tool for developing and strengthening mindfulness (*sati*). The Buddha taught various meditation techniques specifically designed to cultivate mindfulness as part of the Noble Eightfold Path under Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-sati*).

Even without intellectual analysis, individuals often find that meditation brings unexpected blissful joy and happiness with minimal effort, offering longer-lasting contentment as compared to other entertainment activities.

When we achieve calmness and happiness, we are better equipped to reach our daily goals. We perform more effectively in work or study environments with focused minds. Moreover, we enjoy social and recreational activities more fully, extending our internal happiness into all aspects of life. Consequently, we become happier and more effective individuals, positively influencing those around us.

There is a wide variety of meditation techniques available to practitioners, each offering unique approaches to mindfulness and self-discovery. These techniques are often taught by spiritual and religious masters, who often base their teachings on the specific practices and traditions of their lineage. Among the many methods available, two stand out as particularly popular and impactful: *Vipassana* and *Dhammakaya*, the latter also known as the Middle Way Meditation. Let us delve deeper into these two renowned meditation techniques to better understand their principles, origins, and benefits.

IV. VIPASSANA MEDITATION

“Vipassana”, which means “insight” or “clear seeing,” is one of the oldest forms of meditation, originating from the teachings of the Buddha. It focuses on the deep interconnection between body and mind, which can be experienced directly through disciplined attention to physical sensations. The practice involves observing thoughts and emotions as they are, without judgment or attachment, leading to a profound understanding of the nature of existence.

Historical context and practice

Vipassana meditation is rooted in the “*Satipatthana Sutta*” (MN10), where the Buddha outlines the four foundations of mindfulness as a way to cultivate insight (*vipassana*) and calm (*samatha*): Contemplation of the body (*kayanupassana*), Contemplation of feelings (*vedananupassana*), Contemplation of the mind (*cittanupassana*), and Contemplation of mental objects (*dhammanupassana*). This practice aims to cultivate insight into the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of all phenomena.

The Buddha emphasizes the importance of Vipassana in the *Kimsuka Sutta* (SN 35.204), comparing it to a swift pair of messengers delivering the message of truth.

Key scriptural references for practice:

1. “When you see with discernment, ‘All dhammas are not-self’ – you grow

disenchanted with suffering. This is the path to purity.” (*Dhp* 279)

2. In the *Mahasatipatthana Sutta* (*DN* 22), the Buddha states: “This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearing of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of Nibbana.”

The practice of Vipassana involves clear comprehension (*sampajañña*) and mindfulness (*sati*). Practitioners observe the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhana*): impermanence (*anicca*), suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*).

The practical application teaches us to:

1. Observe phenomena as they arise and pass away
2. Understand the impermanent nature of all experiences
3. Develop detachment from sensory experiences
4. Cultivate wisdom through direct observation

Renowned meditation masters like Mahasi Sayadaw and S.N. Goenka have popularized Vipassana in the modern era, emphasizing its transformative potential for achieving liberation from suffering.

Vipassana methodology as taught by S. N. Goenka

The Vipassana meditation technique, as taught by S. N. Goenka, is a systematic approach to self-purification through self-observation. Rooted in the teachings of Theravada Buddhism, Goenka's method presents Vipassana as a universal, non-sectarian practice accessible to individuals of all backgrounds. It emphasizes experiential wisdom over dogma, allowing practitioners to discover the truths of impermanence, suffering, and non-self through direct experience.

Key aspects of the methodology:

1. Ten-day retreat format

The technique is traditionally taught in an intensive ten-day residential retreat. These retreats provide a structured environment, free from external distractions, where participants follow a strict schedule of meditation, ethical discipline, and silence. The first three days are devoted to preparing the mind through focused awareness of the natural breath, a practice called “*Anapana*”.

2. *Anapana-sati* meditation

Practitioners begin by observing their natural breath, focusing on the sensations at the nostrils, in-and-out breathing (*anapana*), and of various states that arise from this observance (mindfulness of breathing). This technique calms and sharpens the mind, enabling it to focus with greater clarity. *Anapana-sati* serves as a foundation for the deeper practice of Vipassana.

3. Vipassana meditation

On the fourth day, practitioners transition to the practice of Vipassana. This involves systematic observation of bodily sensations, moving attention through different parts of the body. By observing these sensations without

attachment or aversion, practitioners cultivate equanimity and develop insight into the impermanent nature of physical and mental phenomena.

4. Ethical discipline (Śīla)

Adherence to a code of moral conduct is an essential part of the practice. Participants commit to precepts such as refraining from lying, stealing, and harming others. This ethical foundation supports mental purification and fosters an environment conducive to meditation.

5. *Samādhi* (Concentration)

Developing concentration through focused attention on the breath enables the mind to remain steady and calm. This preparatory step is essential for Vipassana, as it lays the groundwork for deeper insight.

6. *Pañña* (Wisdom)

Through the practice of Vipassana, practitioners gain insight into the nature of reality. Observing sensations with detachment reveals the truth of *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anattā* (non-self). This experiential wisdom leads to a gradual purification of the mind.

7. Noble Silence

Throughout the retreat, participants observe Noble Silence, refraining from speaking, gesturing, or interacting with others. This silence helps create a conducive atmosphere for introspection and deep meditation.

8. Universal Applicability

S. N. Goenka emphasized that Vipassana is not tied to any religious belief system. Instead, it is a practical tool for personal transformation, offering benefits such as reduced stress, enhanced self-awareness, and inner peace.

By the end of the retreat, participants are encouraged to integrate the practice into their daily lives, dedicating time to continued meditation and ethical living. S.N. Goenka's teaching method has popularized Vipassana worldwide, offering millions the opportunity to embark on a journey of self-discovery and liberation.

Benefits and Impact

Vipassana practice is a direct path to inner peace, happiness, and harmony. Let me explain through Buddhist teachings:

1. Peace (*Santi*):

The Buddha teaches in the *Dvayatanupassana Sutta* (Sn 3.12): "Whatever suffering arises, all that arises dependent on desire." Through Vipassana, we observe and understand our desires, see their impermanent nature, develop detachment, and experience genuine peace.

2. Happiness (*Sukha*):

In the *Dhammapada*, it is said: "There is no happiness higher than peace" (Dhp 202). Vipassana leads to freedom from mental defilements, reduction of craving (*tanha*), development of contentment, and authentic happiness not dependent on conditions.

3. Harmony (*Samaggi*):

The Sedaka Sutta (SN 47.19) states that by protecting ourselves through mindfulness, we protect others. Vipassana helps develop self-understanding, compassion for others, balanced relationships, and inner and outer harmony.

The Buddha confirms this in Anguttara Nikaya:

“One who develops insight (*vipassana*) develops wisdom. One who develops wisdom develops insight” (AN 2.32)

V. THE DHAMMAKAYA METHODOLOGY

After achieving enlightenment, the Buddha introduced his listeners to the Middle Way, or “*majjhimapatipada*” in Pali, a path that avoids the extremes of harsh asceticism and indulgent sensuality. This principle forms the foundation of the Noble Eightfold Path – a comprehensive guide comprising Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. Together, these practices enable individuals to cultivate ethical living, mental discipline, and wisdom.

The transformative power of meditation is exemplified by the Buddha’s journey. Prince Siddhartha meditated under the Bodhi tree for 49 days, steadfast in his determination to attain enlightenment. Through this profound meditation, he transcended his human limitations, transforming from a normal person into a noble being, revered as the Buddha. This journey serves as an inspiration for all who seek inner peace. In Buddhist tradition, those who achieve one of the four levels of awakening (“*jhanas*”, stream-entry, once-returner, non-returner, or arahant – are themselves referred to as “*Ariya Puggalas*” (Noble Persons). These individuals embody the qualities of wisdom, compassion, and liberation.

The Middle Way Meditation Technique specifically aligns with this transformative journey. By focusing the mind on the center of the body, approximately two fingers’ width above the navel, practitioners cultivate stillness and balance. This focal point, considered the natural home of the mind, allows meditators to transcend the distractions of daily life, achieve clarity, and experience profound inner peace. The practice reflects the essence of the Buddha’s teachings, offering a practical method for modern individuals to cultivate the same tranquility and wisdom that transformed the Buddha and countless noble beings before and after him.

Historical Context and Practice

The *Dhammakaya* Methodology traces its origins to the Buddha’s enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, where he attained the “*Dhammakaya*” or the body of enlightenment. This practice reflects the essence of the Buddha’s teachings, offering a practical and simple method for modern individuals to cultivate tranquility, inner peace, happiness, and wisdom. Meditation masters like Luang Pu Wat Paknam (Phra Mongkoltepmuni Sod Chantasaro) and Luang Por Dhammajayo have been instrumental in promoting this technique, highlighting its effectiveness in achieving profound inner peace and wisdom. Phra Mongkoltepmuni (Luang Pu Sodh Candasaro, 1884 -

1959) was a significant Thai Buddhist monk who rediscovered and revived the Dhammakaya meditation technique. After years of practice, on the full moon night of September 1916, at Wat Botbon in Bangkuvieng, Nonthaburi, Thailand, through his meditation practice, he identified what he described as the “original meditation teaching of the Buddha”. This became known as the “Vijja Dhammakaya” or the “Dhammakaya Knowledge”.

Practice

Base Position: The meditator sits in a comfortable position, typically cross-legged, with the right leg over the left and the right hand over the left, both placed palm-up on the lap. For those who have difficulty sitting cross-legged on the floor, sitting on a chair or any comfortable seat is recommended. The first few moments should be spent relaxing the body, ensuring that every part of the body is free from stress, pain, and discomfort.

The Seven Bases of the Mind: In *Dhammakaya*, meditation is considered crucial points of consciousness that serve as stepping stones to deeper meditation. Here’s a detailed explanation of each base:

The First Base focuses on the nostril opening. For men, it is the right nostril, and for women, it is the left nostril. This point is where the breath initially touches, anchoring the mind and calming it.

The Second Base is the inner corner of the eye. Men focus on the right corner, while women focus on the left corner, marking a transition from external to internal focus.

The Third Base is the center of the head, inside the skull, where consciousness gathers.

The Fourth Base is the palate or roof of the mouth, where the tongue touches. It serves as a bridge between the upper and lower centers.

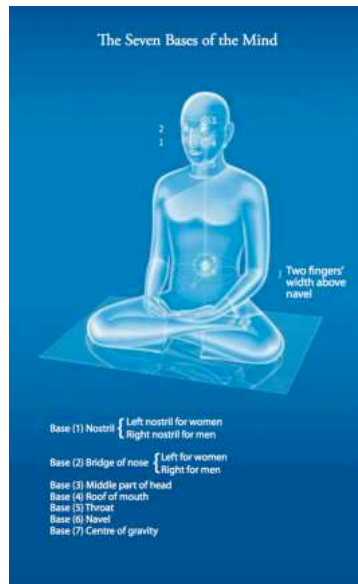
The Fifth Base is located at the throat center. This position connects the upper and lower body, refining awareness.

The Sixth Base is at the center of the body, at navel level. Breath energy gathers here, making it a key energy center in Thai Buddhist meditation.

The Seventh Base is the final position, located two finger-widths above the navel. This base is the gateway to deeper meditative states and is considered the mind’s natural “home”.

The seventh base is regarded as the permanent base for continued practice. Meditators are advised to focus the mind at the seventh base softly, lightly, and calmly, without exertion. The technique teaches that moving through these bases sequentially helps to stabilize the mind, gather scattered energy, create a clear pathway to deeper meditation, and establish the foundation for accessing higher spiritual attainments.

The practitioner is taught to visualize a clear, luminous sphere at each point, maintaining gentle attention without force. The movement from one base to another should be smooth and natural, without strain.



“Visualization and Mantra”

This meditation approach combines visualization and mantra repetition to calm and focus the mind at its natural 7th. The base, located at the “center of the body”. Practitioners are guided to visualize a bright and radiant object, such as the sun, moon, or a crystal ball, as a focal point. This visualization serves to anchor the mind, drawing it into stillness and preventing distractions.

To further support the mind in maintaining focus on the visualized object and to prevent it from wandering, a mantra is repeated continuously. One commonly used mantra is “Sama Arahang, Sama Arahang”, which is softly recited rhythmically and soothingly. The combined effect of visualization and mantra repetition helps practitioners achieve a state of mental clarity, inner calm, and sustained focus. Over time, this practice fosters deeper meditation, promoting feelings of peace, happiness, wisdom, and connection with the mind’s natural home.

Benefits and Impact

“The only definitive way to overcome aggression, selfishness and conflict, wrong views and stubbornness, is to uproot the very thoughts of all these things from the mind by meditating until we can attain the ‘*Dhammakaya*’ within ourselves.” A quote from Luang Phaw Dhammachiayo Bhikkhu’s book “Pearls of Inner Wisdom”.

The *Dhammakaya* Methodology addresses the root causes of conflict: greed, hatred, and ignorance within individuals. By transforming the mind, practitioners become less likely to contribute to conflict and more likely to radiate calm, compassion, and understanding. This technique also aligns with the Noble Eightfold Path, enabling individuals to cultivate ethical living, mental discipline, and wisdom.

VI. INNER PEACE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR WORLD PEACE

The pursuit of world peace often emphasizes external strategies such as diplomacy, policy reforms, and conflict resolution. While these efforts are undeniably important, they address only the symptoms of discord and overlook its underlying causes: the greed, selfishness, delusion, hatred, and ignorance that reside within individuals. These inner disturbances manifest outwardly as conflicts, divisions, and societal unrest. True and lasting peace requires addressing root causes individually, and meditation is a powerful way to unify the mind and eliminate these defilements.

Meditation fosters mindfulness, self-awareness, equanimity, and compassion by calming the mind and transforming negative tendencies. It helps individuals overcome destructive emotions, such as anger and jealousy, and cultivates qualities like empathy, patience, and tolerance. The transformation of the individual mind has profound implications for society as a whole.

The UNESCO Constitution insightfully states:

“Wars begin in the minds of men, so it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” This declaration underscores the critical link between inner peace and global harmony.

When a person achieves inner peace, they are less likely to contribute to conflict in their personal and professional relationships. Instead, they embody calmness and understanding, acting as a stabilizing influence in their immediate environment. Their actions inspire those around them, encouraging others to adopt similar practices and attitudes. This creates a ripple effect, where the peace cultivated by one individual spreads outward, influencing families, communities, and eventually, entire nations.

In addition, collective meditation efforts can amplify these effects. Research has shown that large-scale meditation practices can positively influence societal dynamics, reducing crime rates and fostering social cohesion. Imagine a world where individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds regularly engage in meditation, cultivating inner peace as a shared human value. Such a practice would bridge divides, mitigate conflicts, and create a foundation for sustainable global peace.

Furthermore, achieving inner peace supports sustainable development. People who are centered and mindful are more likely to make ethical and environmentally conscious decisions, addressing issues such as overconsumption, inequality, and ecological degradation. Inner peace fosters wisdom, loving-kindness, clarity, and compassion, enabling individuals to act with a sense of responsibility toward future generations.

In a globalized world, where challenges such as climate change, economic disparity, and political strife affect all humanity, the cultivation of inner peace becomes a necessity, not a luxury. By fostering peace within themselves, individuals contribute to a collective mindset that values harmony over conflict, cooperation over competition, and compassion over division. A world where inner peace is universally embraced is a world poised for sustainable, enduring peace.

VII. AGENT OF CHANGE: PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING INTEREST IN MEDITATION

Promoting meditation as a means of achieving inner peace and global harmony has seen remarkable success through various innovative and large-scale initiatives. These programs demonstrate the transformative power of mindfulness, showcasing how inner peace can drive societal well-being and lasting change.

One of the most impactful efforts comes from the Middle Way Meditation Institute (MMI), a Thailand-based organization that champions the philosophy of World Peace through Inner Peace. MMI believes that lasting global harmony begins with cultivating inner peace within individuals. Their mission is brought to life through a variety of initiatives, including Meditation retreats, peace education programs, and high-profile events like the “Light of Peace”.

The Light of Peace events have received international recognition, with two earning spots in the Guinness Book of World Records. On September 5, 2017, the Global Light of Peace set a record for the largest online meditation lesson, connecting participants from six continents for world peace. The live broadcast included cities such as New York, Rio de Janeiro, Barcelona, Maputo, Iloilo City, and Sydney, highlighting the unifying power of meditation and its potential for global transformation.

MMI’s initiatives extend beyond record-breaking events. They have established programs in schools, families, and communities, emphasizing meditation as a tool for personal and social transformation. These efforts aim to address the root causes of conflict – greed, hatred, and ignorance – by fostering mindfulness, compassion, and understanding.

Local events like the “Light of Peace in San Enrique” show how meditation can influence communities. On August 29, 2015, the town of San Enrique, Iloilo, Philippines, hosted its third Light of Peace event in collaboration with MMI. During the event, named the “Dawn of the Inner Peace Town,” 56,000 people gathered to meditate and practice the Five Universal Goodness (UGS). Over 56,000 candles were lit under a full moon, with the community sharing the message “Progress through Inner Peace,” symbolizing their commitment to harmony. The event was covered by major Philippine newspapers such as the Manila Bulletin and the Philippines Daily Inquirer. San Enrique received recognition as the “First Inner Peace Town in the World” and successfully entered the Guinness World Record for 56,680 lighted candles forming a giant map of the Philippines and the message “World Peace through Inner Peace”.

Furthermore, regional efforts such as the Moonlight Meditation Initiative by the Jordan Meditation Center have promoted mindfulness in regions affected by conflict. Held in 2013 and 2014, these gatherings introduced meditation as a means of healing, dialogue, and cultural understanding.

In today’s digital era, MMI and similar organizations are leveraging modern technology to expand their reach. Initiatives like online meditation programs, AI-powered apps, and immersive AR and metaverse experiences

bring mindfulness to diverse audiences, making it accessible to people worldwide. These platforms allow participants to meditate together, regardless of geographical barriers, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

The World has indeed changed significantly post-COVID-19, and technology is revolutionizing how meditation is practiced and promoted, making it more accessible and customizable for individuals worldwide. AI-powered meditation apps are at the forefront of this transformation, using machine learning” to analyze user preferences and create personalized meditation experiences. These innovations cater to a diverse audience, addressing unique needs and skill levels while enhancing the effectiveness of meditation practices.

Applications like “Calm AI” utilize AI to offer guided meditation tracks tailored to individual needs, providing users with a variety of techniques to improve focus, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being. Similarly, “Vital AI” allows users to customize meditation sessions by selecting preferred voices, techniques, and background music, creating a highly personalized experience. Another prominent example is “Meditopia”, an AI-driven mindfulness app available in 12 languages and accessible on platforms like the Apple Store. It positions itself as a mental health sanctuary, offering the tools and guidance necessary to cultivate mental resilience, balance, and inner peace.

These advancements are not only breaking down barriers to accessibility but also fostering a global sense of unity by allowing people from diverse backgrounds and religious affiliations to engage with meditation in meaningful ways. By integrating AI, AR, and virtual platforms like the metaverse, the practice of meditation evolves beyond traditional settings, empowering individuals and communities to achieve inner peace in an increasingly connected world.

By promoting inner peace as a universal value, these programs encourage people to become agents of change, inspiring a world where compassion, respect, and harmony thrive. As these efforts grow, they illuminate a path to a sustainable future, demonstrating that true peace begins within.



VIII. CONCLUSION

The journey to world peace begins with a profound paradigm shift – a transformation that starts within ourselves and influences how we approach personal, mental, and collective well-being. Through the practice of meditation,

individuals can cultivate inner peace and mindfulness that will foster loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. These qualities form the foundation for a more harmonious and sustainable world. This shift in perspective underscores the deep interconnectedness between personal transformation and global harmony.

The Buddha emphasized in the *Sedaka Sutta* (SN 47.19) that by protecting oneself through mindfulness, we protect others, and by protecting others, we protect ourselves. This interconnected nature of peace is fundamental.

“Hatred never ceases through hatred in this world; through love alone does it cease. This is an eternal law” (*Dhp* 5) - Quote from *Dhammapada Sutta*.

By taking responsibility for our inner transformation, we become agents of change, contributing to a future rooted in compassion, loving-kindness, respect, tolerance, and unity. The ripple effect of such transformation is immeasurable: starting with one individual, if everyone in the world practices meditation until they achieve their Inner-peace, a wave of positive energies that spread outwards across families, communities, society, and nations.

Just as a single candle can light billions of others, illuminating the darkness and transforming the entire universe, the collective embrace of inner peace through meditation has the potential to achieve a world of true and sustainable peace.

The *Metta Sutta* (Sn 1.8) illustrates how individual transformation leads to collective peace:

“Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.”

Furthermore, the Buddha taught in Anguttara Nikaya:

“When the mind is transformed, the world is transformed” (AN 1.21)

The scriptures consistently show that genuine world peace begins with individual transformation through meditation, spreading outward like ripples in a pond. As the Samyutta Nikaya states:

“If one were to practice mindfulness of loving-kindness for even the time it takes to snap one’s fingers, one would not have practiced it in vain” (SN 20.4)

In conclusion, the Buddhist perspective shows that world peace is not an external achievement but a natural manifestation of collectively transformed consciousness through meditation practice.

May all sentient beings be well and happy. *Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

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DEVELOPING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

Ven. Anand Kisht Durge*

Abstract:

Developing inner peace helps you experience greater peace and stability, which can lead to increased harmony in your relationships and a more peaceful world through a more harmonious environment. Some ways to develop inner peace include taking care of your body with adequate sleep, nutrition, and exercise. You can also practice emotional self-care by setting boundaries with people and social self-care by spending time with loved ones. Focus on your breath, be aware of your thoughts and feelings, and live in the present moment. You can also try mindfulness in daily life activities, such as focusing on the sound, taste, and feeling of brushing your teeth. We cannot feel more energetic, attentive, and creative unless we spend time with nature. You can try going hiking, sitting by a lake, or walking your bare feet on the grass. Thus, inner peace is a state that comes from within. It is not bound by external circumstances but arises from self-awareness, acceptance, mindfulness, and self-care. Developing inner peace is a journey of self-exploration and self-acceptance. It is about finding peace and stability within yourself amidst the chaos of the outside world. It is about understanding and embracing that how one feels does not have to be bound by circumstances. Therefore, to find inner peace, one must look inside oneself.

Keywords: *inner peace, mindfulness, anger, yoga and meditation, humanism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Inner peace is an empty pipe dream. How can we find an oasis of calm when our lives are so busy, stressful, and chaotic today? But there are tips and techniques we can all use to find that calm place within ourselves – a place that feels steady and supportive and accessible. You just have to learn

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how to do it. Inner peace is a state of peace where you feel comfortable with yourself, with others, and with the world around you. It is being completely present and comfortable in your skin. Inner peace is less affected by anxiety and stress. When you experience inner peace, you accept who you are – your strengths, flaws, desires, dreams – everything that makes you unique. You are also more accepting of the world around you and the situations you encounter so that you are less affected by anxiety and stress, and you are less likely to feel negative. Inner peace is essentially equanimity. Given the complexities of global conflicts, cultural divisions, and competing interests, the pursuit of world peace often seems like an overwhelming task. However, the journey toward peace begins within each individual. The development of inner peace is the foundation for creating harmony in our communities and, ultimately the world. Inner peace is thus a state of mental, emotional, and spiritual calm that can be achieved despite stress. It is marked by a sense of comfort with oneself and the world around one, and it is often associated with positive emotions such as happiness and contentment.

Connection between inner peace and world peace- Inner peace is a state of mental and emotional calm, free from anxiety and unrest. It promotes clarity, empathy, and resilience. When individuals nurture inner peace, their actions are more likely to reflect patience, understanding, and nonviolence. Collectively, these qualities create a ripple effect that can change social dynamics. World peace requires cooperation, mutual respect, and conflict resolution. These elements thrive in an environment where individuals can face challenges with patience and compassion. These qualities are inherent in inner peace.

Practical steps to develop inner peace

1. Mindfulness practice: Practice meditation or mindfulness exercises daily to center the mind and manage stress. Practice deep breathing techniques to calm immediate emotional reactions.

2. Gratitude and positivity: Practice gratitude to focus on the positive aspects of life. Avoid focusing on negativity and consciously choose uplifting thoughts.

3. Build healthy relationships and resolve conflicts through open communication and understanding. Surround yourself with individuals who promote positivity and growth.

4. Build a connection with nature and spend time in nature to refresh your spirit and gain perspective. Engage in activities like hiking, gardening, or sitting in a park.

5. Volunteer or contribute to causes that benefit others and serve others.

Acts of kindness not only improve the lives of others but also increase your sense of satisfaction.

6. Spend time on personal growth and learning, self-reflection, and understanding your values.

Align your actions with a sense of purpose and integrity.

With all of these tips in mind, the goal is to increase inner peace for global impact – individual efforts are powerful, and collaboration boosts their impact. Communities, organizations, and governments can provide education on emotional intelligence, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution skills and incorporate them into educational systems.

- Promoting dialogue Creating platforms for different voices to be heard, promoting mutual understanding.

- Advocating non-violence Supporting policies and movements rooted in peaceful solutions.

Cultivating seeds of inner peace is tantamount to cultivating world peace. Expanding on this topic, we can delve deeper into its significance, mechanisms, philosophical roots, and global implications. Here is a detailed exploration

Understanding inner peace- Inner peace is more than just the absence of conflict within yourself. It is an active state of balance, self-awareness, and harmony. Achieving inner peace prevents a person from being overwhelmed by negative emotions like anger, fear, or jealousy and facing unnecessary life challenges.

Key components of inner peace

1. Self-awareness- Understanding your own emotions, triggers, and mental patterns.

2. Acceptance- Acknowledging imperfections in yourself and the world without judgment.

3. Gratitude- Recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life.

4. Non-attachment Letting go of unhealthy attachment to outcomes, material possessions, or ego-driven desires.

How Inner Peace Translates Into World Peace-World peace emerges when individuals and communities act with compassion, understanding, and cooperation. Inner peace equips people with the emotional and mental resources to

- resolve conflicts non-violently.

- Promote dialogue and understanding.

- Inspire collective action toward common goals.

Ripple Effects

1. Individual Impact A person living in peace is less likely to project anger or resentment onto others, thereby reducing interpersonal conflicts.

2. Community Impact Peaceful individuals inspire others, creating harmonious environments in families, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

3. Global Implications When communities and nations prioritize peaceful interactions, this reduces the likelihood of war, discrimination, and systemic violence. Cultural and philosophical roots - Many spiritual and philosophical traditions emphasize the connection between inner peace and global harmony. Buddhism encourages peace of mind, Hatha Yoga, and the cessation of suffering

through inner wisdom (Arun Khatri 2017)¹¹.

- Hinduism teaches balance through yoga and meditation, focusing on inner self-realization.

- Christianity advocates forgiveness and love as the path to peace.

- Taoism promotes living in harmony with nature and the Tao (the way).

- Islam values self-improvement and inner struggle (*jihad*) for peace.

These teachings show that creating peace within oneself is a universal principle across all cultures.

Challenges to Inner Peace

1. External stressors social pressures, work demands and global crises.

2. Internal conflict negative self-talk, unresolved trauma or mental health challenges.

3. Overuse of technology constant notifications, comparisons on social media and digital distractions.

Overcoming these challenges requires conscious effort and discipline.

Strategies to Develop Inner Peace- Mental Practices

- Meditation Practices such as mindfulness or loving-kindness meditation (*Metta*) train the mind to be calm and in the present.

- Affirmations Positive self-statements can reprogram the subconscious mind for resilience.

- Visualization Imagining peaceful scenarios can create mental peace.

2. Emotional Practices- Forgiveness Letting go of resentment reduces emotional burden.

- Empathy Understanding others' perspectives promotes compassion and reduces conflict.

3. Physical Practices- Exercise- Activities such as yoga, tai chi or running can relieve stress and increase mental clarity.

- Nutrition A balanced diet supports brain function and emotional regulation.

- Rest Prioritizing quality sleep restores the body and mind.

4. Spiritual Practices- Gratitude rituals Daily gratitude practices can shift focus toward positivity.

- Connecting with nature, spending time outdoors, increases perspective and peace.

- Prayer or contemplation Engaging in spiritual dialogue or reflection provides comfort and direction.

¹ Arun Khatri 2017 Yoga : An Ancient Indian Science of Exercise and Healing. International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology. Volume 3 | Issue 7 | Print ISSN: 2395-6011 | Online ISSN: 2395-602X.

Global Initiatives for Peace- Several organizations and movements link personal transformation to global peace

1. The Art of Living Foundation teaches meditation and yoga to promote inner peace around the world.

2. The World Peace Prayer Society promotes the universal message of peace on Earth.

3. The United Nations Culture of Peace program encourages education and dialogue to promote peace.

Scientific Support- Research shows that practices that promote inner peace, such as mindfulness, have measurable effects on individual and group well-being

Reduction in Aggression Mindfulness training has been linked to lower rates of violence.

- Better conflict resolution Emotional regulation promotes rational decision-making in stressful situations.

- Better relationships Peaceful individuals are more empathetic and understanding.

Action steps to build a peaceful world

1. Educate for peace

- Incorporate emotional intelligence, Vipassana, and mindfulness into school curriculum.

- Promote cross-cultural education to build empathy and reduce prejudices.

2. Empower communities - Create safe spaces for dialogue and reconciliation in divided communities.

- Support grassroots movements focused on mental health and emotional well-being.

3. Advocate for policy change Lobby for policies that prioritize mental health, reduce inequality, and promote social justice.

Vision for world peace - World peace is not an abstract ideal, but a concrete goal that begins with individual effort. Imagine a world where every person takes responsibility for his or her inner state, contributing to harmonious relationships and communities. As this becomes a norm, the structures of society – education, governance, and economics – will evolve to reflect these values, creating a lasting culture of peace. Let's move further into "Cultivating Inner Peace for World Peace" by examining additional dimensions, practical applications, and historical insights.

Broad philosophical and cultural perspectives

1. **Indigenous knowledge** Many indigenous cultures consider inner and outer harmony to be interconnected. For example, Native American traditions emphasize living in balance with nature and respecting all living beings as part of a sacred cycle.

Maori culture in New Zealand focuses on the role of the individual in

maintaining collective well-being (whakapapa) and community harmony.

2. Eastern philosophy Zen Buddhism teaches the practice of “tzen” (seated meditation) to calm the mind and connect with the present moment. A calm mind leads to peaceful interactions.

Hindu Vedanta suggests that the world is a reflection of one’s inner state (*maya*), and by achieving self-realization, one can rise above conflict and foster universal love.

3. Western philosophy Stoicism promotes inner peace by focusing on what can be controlled and accepting what cannot.

and Humanism: Values the ability of humans to achieve peace through reason, empathy, and cooperation.

4. Global Spiritual Movements: Sufism in Islam encourages purification of the heart to reflect divine love, which promotes peace. and Quakerism in Christianity emphasizes inner reflection (silent worship) as a means of understanding peaceful actions in the world.

Practical Examples in Action

1. Personal Example: Mahatma Gandhi His commitment to nonviolence stemmed from deep inner peace, which he developed through daily prayer, fasting, and contemplation. His inner strength inspired a global movement for peace.

Thich Nhat Hanh A Vietnamese Zen master, he advocated engaged Buddhism, which combines meditation with social action. His teachings emphasize that peace begins with our thoughts and words (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2013)².

2. Community-based efforts - Sarvodaya Movement (Sri Lanka) Inspired by Gandhi’s philosophy, this grassroots initiative promotes self-reliance and communal harmony through mindfulness and cooperative action.

- Peace circles (restorative justice) Used in schools and communities around the world, these provide a space for dialogue and conflict resolution based on mutual respect.

3. National-level programs

- Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness Index, which is incorporated in the United Nations, focuses on economic development as well as the spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being of citizens.

- Costa Rica disbanded its army in 1949 and invests in education, health, and environmental protection – prioritizing inner and outer peace for its citizens.

Role of science and psychology – Modern science supports the deep connection between inner peace and social well-being.

1. Neuroscience of Inner Peace - Effects of meditation on the brain S

² Thich Nhat Hanh, 2013 <https://www.parallax.org/mindfulnessbell/article/dharma-talk-to-make-reconciliation-possible/>

Activates the prefrontal cortex, responsible for rational thinking and emotional regulation, and reduces activity in the amygdala, thereby reducing fear and aggression.

- **Neuroplasticity** Regular mindfulness can rewire the brain for compassion, empathy, and resilience.

2. **Social Psychology** **Emotional contagion** Positive emotions and peace are contagious, meaning that peaceful individuals can influence the moods and behavior of others in their community.

- **Conflict resolution** Training in emotional intelligence reduces misunderstandings and promotes cooperative solutions.

Systemic implications Building structures for peace

Inner peace is not only individual but also collective. It requires creating systems that support mental and emotional well-being for all.

1. Education

Peace education Incorporating teachings on mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and nonviolent communication into school curriculum.

- **Conflict resolution training** Teaching students to address disputes constructively.

2. Healthcare

- **Mental health access** Ensuring that counseling, therapy and mindfulness programmes are available to all, especially in post-conflict areas.

- **Encouraging stress-reducing practices** such as yoga and meditation as part of preventive care public health initiatives.

3. Governance and policy

- **Peace building commissions** Governments can establish bodies focused on promoting social cohesion and reconciliation.

- **Economic equality** Policies that address income inequality and promote fair opportunities reduce systemic causes of unrest.

The role of technology in cultivating peace

1. **Mindfulness apps** Tools such as Calm, Headspace, and Insight Timer make meditation accessible globally.

2. **Virtual communities** Online platforms allow people from different cultures to connect, share stories, and learn from each other.

3. **Peace building can help predict conflicts and suggest preventive measures** such as equitable resource distribution.

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

1. **Cultural resistance** Some societies may find mindfulness or inner peace practices counterproductive for fast-paced, competitive environments.

2. **Global crises** Issues such as climate change, pandemics, and war create stress that makes it harder to achieve inner peace.

Opportunities

1. Crisis as a catalyst: Moments of global uncertainty often lead to a search for deeper meaning and greater collaboration.

2. Youth leadership Young leaders around the world are integrating mindfulness and activism, such as Greta Thunberg's emphasis on presence and attention in addressing climate change. Way forward Call to action To create a peaceful world, we must embrace both individual and collective action. So:

1. Start with yourself. Practice mindfulness, forgiveness, and gratitude daily. Be an example of peaceful behavior.

2. Inspire others. Share your experiences with inner peace and encourage others to explore their journey.

3. Get involved in the community. Participate in local peace initiatives, volunteer, or join organizations that promote mindfulness.

4. Advocate for change. Support policies and leaders that prioritize wellness and nonviolence.

Case Studies Inner Peace for Social Change

1. Mahatma Gandhi's Nonviolence Movement-Context British colonial rule in India was marked by oppression, exploitation, and violence. Action Gandhi practiced inner peace through prayer, fasting, and meditation, which helped him develop resilience and embrace ahimsa (non-violence). His inner peace inspired millions to adopt methods of peaceful protest, culminating in India's independence on 15 August 1947.

Lesson: Inner peace can inspire mass movements, proving that quiet resolve can topple oppressive systems.

2. Nelson Mandela's Reconciliation Efforts Context After 27 years in prison during apartheid, Mandela emerged without bitterness and advocated reconciliation rather than revenge, making him famous around the world.

- Action Through self-reflection and inner strength, Mandela facilitated peaceful dialogues, establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to heal the nation.

- Lesson Forgiveness rooted in inner peace can rebuild broken societies.

3. Mindfulness in Education (Richmond, California)

- Context Richmond, California schools faced high rates of violence and dropout.

- Action The "Mindful Life Project" introduced meditation and mindfulness programs. Students showed improved focus, emotional regulation, and less aggression. Lesson Teaching children inner peace can break the cycle of violence and create a culture of empathy.

Actionable Framework From Inner Peace to World Peace

1. Personal Practice

1. Daily Ritual

Dedicate 10 -15 minutes a day to meditation or deep breathing.

Start and end the day with gratitude journaling.

2. Pause and reflect and use moments of stress as an opportunity to pause, breathe, and re-examine.

3. Practice self-compassion and kindness to yourself. Forgive mistakes and learn from them.

2. Family and community engagement

Initiate family peace practices and mindfulness activities during family time, such as shared meditation or sharing gratitude.

2. Organize community workshops and local events to teach mindfulness, emotional intelligence, or conflict resolution.

3. Create or join support networks and support groups where individuals can share their peace-building journeys.

3. Organizational and Institutional Actions

1. Launch workplace peace programs and employee wellness programs focused on mindfulness and stress reduction.

2. Integrate peace education, empathy training, and nonviolent communication into educational curricula and school systems.

3. Use the media to promote public campaigns and messages of inner peace and its impact on global harmony.

4. Policy Advocacy

1. Advocate for mental health investments and more funding for mental health services and preventive care.

2. Support peace promotion policies and policies that encourage international dialogue, cultural exchange, and peace building efforts.

3. Support conflict prevention and programs such as UNESCO's Culture of Peace that disassociate from those that perpetuate systemic inequalities that fuel unrest.

Long-term effects A vision for peace

1. Psychological and social changes

As more individuals embrace inner peace, societies become less reactive and more deliberate in their responses to challenges. This cultural shift can reduce crime, violence, and social polarization.

2. Economic stability

Peace promotes economic growth by reducing conflict-related costs. Communities with peaceful foundations attract investment, tourism, and sustainable development initiatives.

3. Environmental protection

Inner peace encourages a sense of connection with nature, fostering sustainable practices and global cooperation on environmental issues.

4. Conflict resolution and global diplomacy

Leaders who prioritize inner peace are better equipped to engage in

constructive dialogue and resolve disputes without violence.

Interdisciplinary approach

Neuroscience

Research shows that mindfulness enhances the brain's prefrontal cortex, improving decision-making and reducing impulsive responses.

- Collective mindfulness practices have been linked to group cohesion and cooperative behavior.

Economics

- Peace dividend theory suggests that peaceful societies experience economic benefits, including higher productivity, fewer resource conflicts, and more innovation.

Anthropology

Studies of peaceful indigenous cultures suggest that rituals, storytelling, and community-focused practices strengthen harmony.

Global movements and initiatives

1. Mindfulness movement

Millions of people around the world are taking up meditation through apps, courses, and retreats. This growing interest reflects a shift toward prioritizing inner well-being.

2. Peace and sustainability initiatives

The Earth Charter initiative promotes ethical principles for a peaceful and sustainable world, encouraging mindfulness about humanity's collective responsibility.

3. United Nations peace building efforts

Programs such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) link peace (Goal 16) to other global objectives such as health, education, and climate action.

Steps to start today As an individual

1. Commit to practice. Begin a daily meditation or journaling practice.

2. Educate yourself. Read books or attend workshops on inner peace and nonviolence.

3. Spread awareness. Share the principles of inner peace with friends, family, or co-workers. As a leader

1. Model peaceful leadership: Demonstrate calmness and empathy in decision-making.

2. Facilitate dialogues. Create spaces for open communication and conflict resolution.

As a global citizen

1. Support peace organizations. Donate to or volunteer with organizations that promote mindfulness and peace.

2. Advocate for policies Campaign for education reform, mental health resources, and diplomatic initiatives.

Understanding stress: Stress is the body's natural response to challenges and demands. While it can be beneficial in small doses, chronic stress can lead to serious health problems such as anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular problems. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies to manage stress before it takes a toll on your well-being.

Identify stressors – The first step in managing stress is to identify what triggers it. These triggers can be external, like deadlines or conflicts, or internal, like perfectionism or unrealistic expectations. Keeping a stress journal can help you pinpoint patterns and better understand your stressors.

Develop healthy habits – Building a foundation of healthy habits is the key to building resilience against stress. These include:

Regular exercise – Physical activity helps release endorphins, which improve mood and reduce stress hormones like cortisol.

Balanced diet – Eating nutritious meals at regular intervals keeps your energy levels stable and supports overall health.

Adequate sleep – Lack of sleep can increase stress levels. Aim to get 7-9 hours of good sleep every night to refresh your mind and body.

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques – Practices like meditation, deep breathing exercises, and yoga can calm your mind and reduce stress.

Prioritize and organize Feeling overwhelmed often stems from a sense of chaos and disorganization. Take control. Set priorities. Identify tasks that are urgent and those that are important, and focus on completing them one by one.

Time management: Use techniques such as the Pomodoro technique (working in intervals with breaks) to maintain productivity without burning out.

Learn to say no. Don't put too much pressure on yourself. Knowing your limits and setting boundaries are key to managing stress effectively.

Build a support network. Connecting with others is vital for emotional well-being. Whether it's friends, family, or a support group, having people you can talk to and rely on during stressful times gives you perspective and comfort.

Seek professional help. If stress is significantly impacting your daily life and wellbeing, consider seeking help from a mental health professional. Therapy can provide tools and strategies tailored to your specific needs to effectively manage stress.

Practice self-compassion

Be kind to yourself, especially during challenging times. Accept that you can't control everything, and mistakes are growth opportunities. Developing self-compassion reduces self-criticism and increases resilience.

Engage in activities you enjoy

Make time for hobbies and activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's reading, painting, or hiking, engaging in enjoyable activities helps

balance stress and refresh your mind.

Meditate – Despite being a simple act, meditation can deeply impact your mental state. It helps develop a deep sense of balance and peace.

How to meditate? Find a comfortable place away from the hustle and bustle. Close your eyes, inhale deeply, and exhale slowly. Don't worry about doing it right or that a few minutes can make a huge difference. Remember, resources like Calm are here to help. We have hundreds of meditations and programs to help you develop your meditation practice.

Live in the present- How often do you find yourself stuck in the past or feeling anxious about the future? If you're like the rest of us, probably quite often. But as you know, the present moment is all we have. Embrace it, live it. Life unfolds in the now. How to live in the present? When you're doing daily tasks like eating, taking a walk, or even household chores, try to immerse yourself completely in that experience. Notice how the environment around you looks, feels, smells, and sounds. It's like giving your brain a mini vacation, and the effect induces a sense of inner peace.

Always cultivate positive thinking- Our minds are powerful things. They can act as our greatest allies or our worst enemies. It all depends on how we use them. When we learn to develop positive thinking by focusing on the good, we begin to develop our inner peace. How to develop positive thinking? Positively start your day. Write in a diary what you are excited about or what you are grateful for. If a negative thought tries to sneak in, cross it out and replace it with a positive thought.

Develop love for yourself- Loving others starts with loving yourself. It's not always an easy journey. We understand that. But when it comes to inner peace, the purpose is to learn to be who you are, learn to cherish your strengths, and accept your flaws when needed. You are unique, and that's something to celebrate. So how to develop love for yourself? Take some time to write down what you like about yourself. If you hit a dead end or two, imagine your best friend. What would they like about you?

Practice self-care for all of this-Taking care of our physical, mental, and emotional health is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Don't forget to take time for yourself every day. Not only do you deserve it, but it's also a vital way to develop love for yourself that leads to inner peace. How to practice self-care? Schedule some time for yourself. Yes, that means put it on the calendar and stick to it! Spend your time doing anything you like- a thrilling novel, a soothing bath, a peaceful walk in nature, or some relaxing yoga asanas. Today the world has become a global village. Although technology has helped mankind to reach the pinnacle of material development, intolerance is increasing among people. Due to which society has become a victim of conflict, terrorism, environmental destruction, poverty, illiteracy and many mental and physical diseases. Peace is the need of the hour. It is a coveted goal of mankind. Consolidation and promotion of education for peace is a very delicate and challenging task. Creating a world culture of peace requires the participation of all the parties of

the society who together underline the culture of the world- the United Nations system, governments, lawmakers, scientists, NGOs, media, civil society, and institutions like teachers and parents, etc. The importance of education for peace is embedded in the age-old traditions of India's civilization and cultural heritage, which has been going on for centuries. The philosophers, spiritual leaders, and educationists of India have all emphasized the importance of education for human values and peace building in various ways since ancient times. Among the contemporary philosophers is Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, whose appeal to impart education inspired by human values transcends class, caste, religion, and nationality. The present paper focuses on his contribution towards education for peace. It also brings to light his global peace initiatives (Anju and Saroj, 2017).³

Empirical studies have demonstrated that turnover is associated with the demographic and biographical characteristics of workers. The findings of this study indicate that location has a significant relationship with respect to the retention variable. Employees in Bangalore rated the leadership practices of their organizations higher than employees in Hyderabad. Intention to leave received lower ratings and differed significantly across the two locations. Employees in Hyderabad indicated a greater intention to leave their organization than employees in Bangalore. When leadership practices are employee-friendly, employees are less likely to form negative opinions about the organization, but if supervisor support is not favorable, employees start thinking about leaving the organization.

The data also shows that gender has a significant relationship with retention factors. Reflecting their satisfaction with the retention factors considered in this study, men have given higher ratings to retention variables than women. However, in women, the intention to leave the organization is higher than in men. A lot of studies comparing the behavior and attitudes of men and women have reported that gender differences exist (Mor Barak et al. 1998),⁴ and these experiences, in turn shape the attitudes and behavior of an individual in the workplace (Siyani and Romberger 1995).⁵ The findings also indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between men and women. The findings also indicate that statistically significant differences have been found between different age groups as determined by one-way t-tests for all retention variables. Age is associated with attitudinal and behavioral differences (Pfeffer 1985⁶,

³ Anju and Saroj 2017. CONTRIBUTION OF SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR PEACE. *Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce*. 3 (1), July 2017[84]

⁴ Mor Barak, M. E., Cherin, D. A., & Berkman, S. (1998). Organisational and personal dimensions in diversity climate. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 34 (1), 82 - 104.

⁵ Cianni, M., & Romberger, B. (1995). Perceived racial, ethnic, and gender differences in access to developmental experiences. *Group and Organisation Management*, 20 (4), 440 - 459.

⁶ Pfeffer, J. (1985). Organizational demography: Implications for management. *California Management Review*, 28 (1), 67 - 81.

Wehrmeyer and McNeil 2000)⁷. There is evidence that older people face more barriers in recruitment and selection than younger people. Therefore, studies report that quantitative dimensions of retention affect employee intention to leave or remain in an organization due to significant differences in attitudes and beliefs toward various retention factors.

II. CONCLUSION

Thus, we conclude that inner peace is the seed from which global harmony grows. It requires individual effort to cultivate, but the collective impact is transformative. By prioritizing mindfulness, empathy, and connection, humanity can transcend divisions and create a lasting culture of peace. Do you want help developing a personal or community plan to promote peace, or do you want to explore more historical examples? In our mundane and busy lifestyles, we strive to reach a level where we can experience peace. The tumultuous circumstances in our lives create impulsive and reactive emotions in us, which makes us oblivious to the obvious and thus creates disharmony, hatred, and disturbing situations. And most times, instead of understanding the cause of our suffering and taking action to root it out, we fall prey to depression or anger that overwhelms our ability to think clearly. The game is all about keeping the mind in control under such perplexing circumstances.

As difficult as it may seem to achieve, it is not impossible. By practising the steps below with patience and determination, you can control your mind and achieve inner peace. Meditate and stay calm- A clear and calm mind is a storehouse of positive thoughts. This can be achieved through meditation, which prepares the mind to release pent-up negativity and effortlessly bring balance. As a result, it regains our consciousness and increases emotional resilience, helping us take action while bringing us back to the present moment. Prepare your mind to neither struggle against it nor argue with it. In our fast-paced world filled with demands of work, relationships, and personal goals, stress has become an inevitable companion for many. However, learning to manage stress effectively is not just about surviving; it is about thriving. Managing stress effectively is a journey that requires self-awareness, commitment, and a willingness to prioritize your well-being. By incorporating these strategies into your daily life, you can develop resilience, reduce stress levels, and enjoy a greater sense of inner peace. Remember, it's not about eliminating stress, but learning to navigate life's challenges with grace and flexibility.

⁷ Wehrmeyer, W., & McNeil, M. (2000). Activists, pragmatists, technophiles and tree huggers? Gender differences in employees' environmental attitudes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 28, 211 - 222.



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WORLD PEACE THROUGH THE KAMMA LAW

Dr. Ramesh Rohit*

Abstract:

In Buddhism, the *kamma*, action or deed, is the most effective cause in determining an individual's future existence. Although other systems of Indian philosophy hold similar views on the unique role of deeds in human life, Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent self. As a result, we find a variety of logical interpretations for the transition of *kamma*'s result into another birth. The Buddhist theory of *kamma* emphasises personal, sociological, and psychological explanations in the context of contemporary human concerns. In Buddhism, *kamma* refers to what an individual receives from himself in a former state of life, not from his ancestors. The actions of a being determine its rebirth and, as a result, its continuing life; the entire universe of sentient beings originated in *kamma*. Indeed, the fundamental aspect of *Kamma* is entirely psychological, as the human being's mental state of mind and power of will play the most significant roles. There are two types of *kamma*: *Citta-kamma*, or consciousness, and *cetasika-kamma*, which is tied to the mind; nonetheless, mental *kamma* is the foundation of all *kamma*. In the Buddhist doctrine of *kamma*, the teachings of non-attachment, devotion, and deprivation are also deeply connected with *kamma*. Even after worldly enjoyment, the desire of an individual cannot be ceased by any means. An individual performs his deeds because of *taṇhā* craving thirst or desire. Craving builds this bodily house. Therefore, an individual travels in this world, which causes all kinds of suffering. The most painful is reborn again and again.

An individual, after understanding the real nature of the "Theory of *Kamma*" may attain the extinction of desires and become free from all suffering, being detached from worldly objects and by way of performing good deeds very carefully. As a result, a human wanders in this world, causing many forms of misery. The most painful thing is having to give birth repeatedly. An individual who understands the true nature of the 'Theory of *Kamma*' can achieve

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the extinction of wants and become free of all pain by becoming detached from worldly possessions and practising good deeds with great attention. According to this theory, a person should only use his or her abilities for good, and he should do so while remaining watchful and in control. According to *Majjhimanikāya*, a person's purification is determined by their actions, beliefs, *Dhamma*, conduct, and vocation, rather than their ancestry or riches. Same things are seen *Dhammapada* and *Suttanipāta*: “*Na jatāhi na gottena/ na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo/ yamhi saccanñ ca dhammo ca/ so sucī so ca brāhmaṇo.*”¹

Not by matter hair, nor by family, nor by birth does one become a *brāhmaṇa*. But in whom here exist both truth and righteousness, pure is he, a *brāhmaṇa*. “*Na jacchā vasalo hoti, na jacchā hoti brāhmaṇo/ Kammunā vasalo hoti, Kammunā hoti brāhmaṇo.*”² One's not an outcaste caused by “birth”, not by “birth” a brahmin is; caused by karma one's outcaste, a brahmin is by karma caused.

Keywords: *Kamma*, volitional action, *cetanā* (volition), ethical conduct, moral responsibility, *paññā* (wisdom), *samādhi* (concentration), *sīla* (morality).

I. INTRODUCTION

“Everyone trembles at the stick, for all of them life is dear, comparing oneself (with others), one should not hurt or have (them) hurt.”³

In *Pāli*, *Kamma* is an action word. In its broadest meaning, *Kamma* encompasses all good and evil behaviours. It encompasses all types of purposeful acts, including *Mano* (mental), *Vācā* (verbal), and *Kāyā* (deeds). Everything you do with your limbs is physical activity. Verbal activity refers to the words that you pronounce. Mental action refers to the thoughts that occur in your head. Given below Gatha is found in *Dhammapada* related to this: “*Kāyena saṁvarō sadhu, sādhu vācāya saṁvarō, / manasā saṁvarō sadhu, sādhu sabbattha saṁvarō / sabbattha saṁbutō bhikkhu, sabba dukkhā pamuccati.*”⁴

Good is restraint of the body. Good is restraint of speech. Good is restraint of the mind. Restraint everywhere is good. The *bhikkhu* restrained in every way is freed from all suffering.

Verbally guarded, well-restrained in mind, not doing a wrong deed with the body, one should purify these three paths of action, one should undertake the path shown by seers.⁵

In its ultimate sense, *kamma* refers to all moral and immoral will. The

¹ *Dhp* 393 *Gāthā*. 630.

² *Sn*p. 21 *gāthā*, p. 34.

³ *Dhp*. 130: “*Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa, sabbesaṁ jīvitaṁ piyaṁ, / attānaṁ upamaṁ katvā, na haneyya na ghātaye.*”

⁴ *Dhp*. 393 *Gāthā*. 587.

⁵ *Ibid*. 505: “*Vācānurakkhī manasā susaṁvuto, kāyena ca akusalaṁ na kayirā, / ete tayo Kammapathe visodhaye, ārādhaye maggaṁ isippaveditaṁ.*”

mental concomitant, *cetanā-cetasika*, is what causes these three behaviours.⁶ *Cetanā* is in charge of completing all *kamma* actions, thus you are compelled to do them. *Cetanā* is commonly known as *kamma*. According to the *Buddha*, “*Kamma*” refers to mental will. Having volition, one acts with body, voice, and thought. *Cetanā* (volition) is the primary source of *kamma* in Buddhism. This term has a unique connotation that cannot be translated into other languages. *Cetanā* is the primary cause of all physical, verbal, and mental actions, whether good or evil. Nothing can be accomplished without *cetanā*.

Cetanā is also a motivator for the intellect. *Kamma* occurs as a result of *cetanā*’s driving force. *Kamma* becomes stronger as *cetanā* increases. *Cetanā* is a very subtle reality. Accurate comprehension of *cetanā* is challenging. However, the mind is motivated by subtle *cetanā*. The *Buddha* refers to *cetanā*, which precedes and is solely responsible for the accomplishment of action, as the action or *kamma*. *Cetanā* stimulates the mind and consciousness to perform their respective roles. *Cetanā*’s force determines the intensity of *kamma*.⁷

To achieve success in this world, *kamma*, *paññā* (wisdom) and *vīriya* (effort) are essential. Of these three, wisdom and effort are prominent, and so people recognize the importance of their roles. As *kamma* and its results are difficult to understand, some people do not believe in them. Those who claim to be non-believers are performing *karmic* actions every day in contradiction to their own beliefs. Everyone is constantly absorbed in their work. They get paid by their work. There are two types of effort or action: good and evil. Criminals are punished with fines, whipping, jail, or hanging, as per the law. Good deeds can lead to financial, social, or political rewards. As a result, people must suffer or enjoy the repercussions of their *kamma*, good or evil. As a result, *kamma* and its effects exist in the world. One cannot dispute or argue against the reality of *kamma* and its consequences. *Kamma* is delicate, but it has enormous power.

Only when one understands correctly the principle of *kamma* and its effect, one shall possess the right understanding and right view. The right view is *sammādit̥ṭhi*.⁸ The right view leads to the right thought, right speech, the right action, right livelihood, and good morality. Paying no attention to *kamma* and its effect; not understanding it and ignoring it leads to the wrong understanding, the wrong view. Thus, a person who understands *kamma* and its effect and one who does not understand *kamma* will be so different that they are wide apart like the earth and the sky. As a result, there are inequities and various destinies for humans over the planet. One is inferior, while another is superior. One dies in infancy, another at the age of eighty or one hundred. One is sick and infirm, while the other is vigorous and healthy. One is gorgeous, and the other is ugly. One was raised in luxury, the other in suffering. One person is born a millionaire, while another is born in misery. One is genius, while the other is stupidity. Every action reacts. This is the eternal law. Buddhism referred to it

⁶ *Kamma, The Real Creator*, Mehm Tin Mon, p. 115 - 117

⁷ *Handbook of the Abhidhamma*, Vol. I, Silānanda U, p. 215.

⁸ *Buddha and His Teachings*, Narada Mahāthera, p. 337.

as *kamma*. *Kamma* refers to wholesome and unwholesome volitional activity, while *kamma vipāka* is the consequence of action. According to Buddhism, man holds the highest rank. Man is his own master, and no higher entity or force sits in judgment of his fate. As a result, man can determine his future through choice and action. It is up to his deeds whether his destiny would take him up or down, to pleasure or despair. Practicing compassion towards all living beings, including humans and animals, leads to greater happiness. Conversely, hostility and evil behaviours motivated by hatred lead to misery.

Buddhists believe in *kamma* and its results. They believe there are three stages of life. There are the Previous lives, the Present lives, and the Future lives. Performing excellent *kamma* in the past leads to superiority, longevity, strength, health, and attractiveness in the present. Doing good will result in blessings in the future, whereas evil actions will result in naughtiness. If we sow a mango seed, for example, a mango tree will grow and bear mangoes, while if we sow a chilli seed, a chilli plant will grow and generate chillies. Good action leads to our aim, *nibbāna*. So, if a person wants to be fortunate, take good action. Every action has an effect, and a cause occurs first, followed by an effect; thus, *kamma* is known as ‘the law of cause and effect.’⁹ For example, tossing a stone is considered an action. The stone hits a glass pane and breaks it. The break is the result of throwing, but it is not the end. The broken window is now the source of more trouble. Some of one’s money will have to go to replace it, thus one is unable to keep it or spend it on something else, resulting in a sense of disappointment.

This may make one impatient, and if one is not careful, the irritability may lead to doing something else that is incorrect, and so on. There is no limit to the result of the action, no stop to *kamma*, therefore we must be very careful about our acts so that their effect is positive. To strengthen ourselves and start a better *kamma*, it’s important to perform excellent and useful actions that will reap positive results. Throw a stone into a pond and see the results. When it hits, it makes a splash and leaves behind small circles. Watch how the rings get bigger and broader until they’re too big and too small for our eyes to see. The small stone disturbs the water in the pond, but its work is not yet complete. When the little waves reach the boundaries of the pond, the water travels back and pushes the stone that has disturbed it. Our activities have repercussions, similar to how waves affect a stone. If we behave with wicked intentions, the repercussions will continue to trouble us. By remaining gentle and calm, we may reduce the impact of trouble and reap the benefits of our excellent *kamma*. Sowing a mango seed produces a mango tree while sowing a chili seed produces a chili plant. *Kamma* produces outcomes in several fields, including the formless. Unwholesome *kamma* can have negative effects on humans, celestial beings, and other entities. In Buddhist teachings, the term “*Kamma*” refers only to volitional action.¹⁰ *Kamma* distinguishes between wholesome

⁹ *Buddha and His Teachings*, Narada Mahāthera, p. 337.

¹⁰ *Sāmyutta Nikāya Pāli (Sagātha Vagga, Nidāna Vagga, Khandha Vagga)*, Kashyap Jagdish,

and unwholesome volitional conduct. Volition is the driving force behind the action. According to *Buddha*, beings own their *kamma*. *Kamma* is a crucial concept in Buddhism, as it refers solely to one's property.

II. THE WORKING OF KAMMA IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

Kamma (Skr. *karma*) comes from the root “*kar*” which means ‘to do, commit, or perform. “*Dharātihi rammo*” is formed by adding the *ramma* suffix to the root “*dhar*”, resulting in words such as *dhammo*, *Kamma*, and *vamma*. *Kamma* translates to “activity”, “deed”, “duty”, or “doing”. For example, “*karīyatīti Kamman*” means “deed is to be done.”¹¹

Kamma can be experienced in hell, the realm of ordinary animals, the realm of the hungry shades, the human world, and the heavenly worlds. In Buddhist cosmology, breaks in hell or heaven, like those in the other worlds, are not eternal. When the force of one's *Kamma* that causes rebirth in those levels wears out, one gets reborn elsewhere. The *Suttas* identify three types of *kamma*, or volitional deeds, based on the period at which they give fruit; *kamma* producing fruit in this birth, *kamma* bearing fruit in the next life, and *kamma* bearing fruit in later lives. During the *kamma* - volitional stage, the mind experiences a series of impulsive *javana* (thought moments) that occur rapidly. Now, of these impetuous moments, the first will give fruit in this lifetime, the last in the next, and those in between will bear fruit in future incarnations. The two types of *kamma*-bearing fruit in this life and the next may occasionally become ineffectual. *Kamma* that produces fruit in later incarnations will continue to *kamma-vipāka* (produce results) as long as the life process continues. According to *Buddha*'s teachings, there are sixteen different types of *kamma*. There are four groups of four or fourfold subdivisions. The sixteen types of *kamma* are classified into four groups based on function, order of ripening, period of ripening, and place of ripening.

There are twelve different kinds of *kamma*, which will be separated into the following sections: There are four types of *kamma* based on their function, order of ripening, and time of ripening. When *kamma* ripens, the volitions involved in carrying out actions might serve many functions. The functions can be classified as four:

There is reproductive *janaka kamma*, which determines the future birth. *Kamma* creates and manifests the unborn, also known as *janaka*. According to *Janaka Kamma*, each birth is influenced by past experiences, both positive and negative, that occurred at death. The *kamma* that influences future birth is known as *janaka kamma*.¹²

Supportive *upatthambaka kamma* enhances or sustains the effects of existing *kamma*. It comes near the *Janaka kamma* and supports. Supportive *kamma* cannot produce results on its own. It improves the results of other

p. 210.

¹¹ *Padarūpasiddhi*, Gandhasarabhivamsa Bhikkhu, p. 430.

¹² *Handbook of the Abhidhamma*, II, Silānanda, p. 172.

kammas. The supportive *kamma* prolongs the result of some other *kamma*.¹³

Counteractive *upapilaka kamma* suppresses or changes the reproductive *kamma*. *upapilaka kamma* is the opposite of *janaka kamma*, as it weakens and delays its fruition.¹⁴

Destructive *upaghātaka kamma* replaces existing *kamma* with its results. *Upaghātaka Kamma* can neutralize the potential energy of *janaka kamma*. It is more powerful than the previous *kamma*, which might act suddenly when seeking an opening. The second method disables and eliminates the *Janaka kamma*, resulting in its effect. In other words, the person dies abruptly and is reborn according to the *upaghātaka-kamma*.¹⁵

The instance of Devadatta is an example of how the four *kammas* operate. His good *janaka-kamma* prepared him to be born into a royal family. The *Janaka kamma* and supporting *kamma* both contributed to his continuing comfort and prosperity. *Kamma's* obstructive nature became evident when he was excommunicated from the *saṅgha* and humiliated. His wicked actions caused a division in the *saṅgha*, resulting in a disastrous *kamma* that banished him to hell "Avīci".¹⁶

There are four types of *kamma* according to the order of ripening, which are separated into sections as follows: (1) *Garuka-kamma* (Serious), (2) *Āsaṇṇa kamma* (Near-death), (3) *Āciṇṇa kamma* (Habitual), (4) *Kaṭṭattā kamma* (Residual).

Garuka Kamma (Serious) can be either good or bad, resulting in a specific result in this life or the next. If positive, it is completely mental, as in *jhāna*. Otherwise, it's verbal or physical. There are five types of *Garuka-Kamma* based on severity: *Mātughātaka* (Matricide), *Pitughātaka* (Patricide), and *Arahantaghātaka* means the killing of an *Arahant*, *Lohituppādaka* refers to the injury of a Buddha, while *Saṅghabhedaka* causes split in the *Saṅgha*.¹⁷

Āsanna-Kamma refers to actions or memories taken just before death. A person may have performed a successful *kamma* in the past, possibly years ago. If he remembers *kamma* soon before death, it transforms into a result-giving *kamma*. *Kamma* can occur shortly before death. This type of *kamma* is known as Near-death *Kamma*. This occurs just before the final *javana* step, which is the death thought process. Before the procedure, there are continuous mental processes. During these moments, a *kamma* may be remembered and have an impact on the future life. *Kamma* rituals can also have consequences in future lives.

Ācinna Kamma (Habitual) refers to repeating and recollecting activities that one likes greatly. *Habitual Kamma* refers to daily activities such as meditating, studying, teaching, showing respect to the *Buddha*, and making offerings to

¹³ *Manual of the Abhidhamma*, Narada, p. 292.

¹⁴ *Handbook of the Abhidhamma*, II, p. 165.

¹⁵ *Manual of the Abhidhamma*, Narada, p. 294.

¹⁶ *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā*. II Śāstri Swāmi Dvārikādāsa, p. 90.

¹⁷ *Buddha and His Teachings*, Narada Thera, p. 270.

monks. Consistently performing a *kamma*, whether positive or negative, can enhance its effectiveness. In the absence of substantial or death-proximate *kamma*, this form of *kamma* generates rebirths. When there is no substantial or death-proximate *kamma*, habitual *kamma* will result in a rebirth in the future life. The importance of habitual *kamma* cannot be overstated, as it can occasionally lead to death.

Kaṭatta Kamma (Residual) is the “Cumulative *Kamma*” that encompasses all that cannot be included in the above three categories. It serves as a reserve fund for a certain being. Furthermore, it is done once and quickly forgotten. If we have *Garuka-Kamma*, it will affect our next existence after death. If we lack *Garuka-Kamma*, we must rely on *Āsanna-Kamma* to shape our future lives. To achieve a good *Āsanna-Kamma*, family members or friends can arrange healthy acts such as presenting robes to monks or listening to *Dhamma*-preaching for a loved one on their deathbed. Remind the dying individual of their past good actions.

There are four types of *kamma* based on the time of repentance: *Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya Kamma* (Immediately effective), *Upapajjavedaniya Kamma* (Next-life effective), and *Aparāpriya Vedaniya Kamma* (Indefinitely effective), *Ahosi Kamma* (defunct).¹⁸

Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya Kamma (Immediately effective *Kamma*). Moral and immoral actions that yield results in this very life are called *Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya Kamma*. The term “*Diṭṭhadhamma*” refers to this present life, while “*Vedaniya*” means to be experienced. Thus, this type of *kamma* refers to actions whose effects manifest within the same lifetime. It is often interpreted as quickly effective *kamma*, meaning that its results can arise immediately, tomorrow, or shortly. Regardless of whether the outcome is immediate or slightly delayed, it must occur within this lifetime. However, if the conditions necessary for its fruition are not met, this *kamma* becomes ineffective, meaning it will not produce results at all.

Upapajjavedaniya Kamma (Next-life effective *Kamma*). Certain actions produce their effects in a subsequent life and are known as *upapajjavedaniya kamma*. This type of *kamma* does not bear fruit in the present life but manifests in the next one. If it fails to produce results in the following existence, it is considered defunct and will not yield any outcomes. This form of *kamma* is generated by the *final javana* moment (i.e., the seventh *javana* moment) in a *javana* process. It is considered the second weakest in the series, according to Ledi Sayādaw. However, not all teachers share this view. There are differing perspectives on the strength of *Janana* moments. Some teachers argue that *Javana* gains momentum from the first to the seventh, with the final one being the strongest. In contrast, Ledi Sayādaw asserts that the first *javana* is weak, the second is slightly stronger, the third gains more strength, and the fourth is the strongest. From there, the fifth becomes weaker, followed by the sixth and seventh, with the seventh being the second weakest. He believes that the five middle *Javanese* moments are the strongest. This *kamma* generates results

¹⁸ *Manual of the Abhidhamma*, Narada, p. 294.

in the next life. A good *kamma* results in rebirth as a human or *Deva*, while an *akusala kamma* leads to miserable states.

Aparāpriya Vedaniya-Kamma (Indefinitely effective *kamma*) refers to activities that have an indefinite effect on any existence in *samsāra*. Its results manifest from the second future existence onward. For an accurate understanding, let 'this life' be the first existence and 'the next life' be the second. *APARĀPRIYA vedaniya-kamma* does not bear fruit in either of these but may take effect in any future existence beyond the second.

Ahosikamma (Defunct *Kamma*), for a seed to sprout, certain auxiliary causes such as soil, rain, etc., are required; similarly, for a *kamma* to produce an effect, several auxiliary causes such as circumstances, surroundings, etc., are necessary. *Ahosi-kamma* refers to a *kamma* that cannot produce an effect in this life or any future life due to the absence of these auxiliary causes.¹⁹

The practice of *Kamma* will be divided into three sections, as follows: *Dasa Kusala Kamma Pada* (Ten Causes of Action) and *Puñña Kiriya Vatthu* (Meritorious Deeds). Three-fold Training. The ten Wholesome actions are based on *Alobha* (non-greed), *Adosa* (non-anger), and *Amoha* (non-delusion). Wholesome *Kamma* is created by ten actions that involve deeds, words, and thoughts.

Whoever kills a living being, and speaks a word that is not true, takes what is not given here, and commits adultery, that person who is devoted to a drink of liquor and wine, digs up his root right here in the world.²⁰

Three of these crimes are physically committed. Abstaining from killing living beings (*Pānātipātā-virati*), Abstaining from stealing (*Adinnādānā-virati*) Abstaining from sexual misconduct (*Kāmesu micchācārā-virati*) Four are caused by word- namely, abstaining from false speech (*Musāvādā-virati*), Abstaining from malicious speech (*Pisunavācā-virati*), Abstaining from harsh speech (*Pharusavācā-virati*), Abstaining from gossip (*Samphappalāpa-virati*). There are three commitments by mind, namely, abstaining from coveting (*Anbhijjhā*), abstaining from ill-will (*Avyāpāda-virati*), and Possessing Right Understanding of the *Dhamma* (*Sammādiṭṭhi*).²¹

Thus, wholesome implies good action, speech, and thought. Unwholesome refers to bad actions, statements, and thoughts. Cultivating positive actions, speech, and thoughts leads to the development of excellent *Kamma*. Similarly, cultivating negative actions, statements, and thoughts leads to harmful *Kamma*.

The *Dasa Puñña-Kiriya Vatthu* is a list of ten meritorious acts practised by Buddhists to achieve eternal happiness. *Nirvāna* can refer to a layperson

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 204.

²⁰ *Dhp.* 246 - 247, p. 461: "Yo pāṇam-atipādeti, musāvādañ-ca bhāsati, loke adinnam ādiyati,/ paradārañ-ca gacchati, surāmerayapānañ-ca yo naro anuyuñjati,/ idhevaṃ-eso lokasmim mūlaṃ khaṇati attano."

²¹ *Handbook of the Abhidhamma*, II, U Silānanda, p. 202.

or a monk. Buddhist monks adhere to stricter Vinaya norms to expedite the process. *Dāna* (Giving) means Charity-Generosity refers to the moral act of giving one's possessions. Giving to others is ultimately a voluntary act. *Sīla* (Morality), virtues or precepts. Avoiding negative behaviour through physical and verbal means. The commandments can be five, eight, nine, ten, two hundred twenty-seven, or three hundred thirty-one, depending on one's ability, devotion, and spiritual level.

Bhāvanā (Meditation), mental culture involves meditating or reflecting on the forty exercises to achieve mental tranquillity. *Vipassanā*, also known as insight meditation, aims to develop and grow the mind by gaining insight into its true nature. Reverence (*Apacāyana*) involves honouring the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, *Saṅgha*, parents, elders, teachers, and others who live virtuously. Worshipping, offering flowers, or standing up from one's seat are all ways to express respect.

Veyāvacca (Service) provides support to those who deserve respect, such as the sick, elderly, and vulnerable. Service includes welcoming visitors and maintaining cleanliness in homes, schools, and temples. Transference of merit (*Pattidāna*) is asking others to share a person's moral deeds or accomplishments. Granting merit to the dead, the *Devas*, and all beings, and wishing them health and happiness. Sharing and celebrating the merits of others (*Pattānumodanā*). This includes celebrating positive deeds even if the doer is unaware of them. A guy who was delighted when offered to the *Buddha* received equal merit.²²

Dhamma Sāvana (Listening to the *Dhamma*). Hearing the *Dhamma* with a pure mind helps practice morality (*Sīla*), concentration (*Samādhi*), and insight (*Paññā*). Teaching the *Dhamma* (*Dhamma Desanā*). Teaching the *Dhamma* with compassion for the listeners and without the impure purpose of collecting donations, honour, praise, or celebrity. *Diṭṭhijju Kamma* (Straightening one's perspective) It is a form of wholesome *Kamma* gained via clarifying one's perspective after growing up with harmful beliefs. It entails adopting the appropriate attitude on the nature of *Kamma*, life, existence, and so forth.

"Supporting one's mother and father, caring for one's wife and children, and engaging in peaceful occupations, this is the highest blessing."²³

"To cease and abstain from evil, forbearance concerning intoxicants and steadfastness in virtue; this is Blessing Supreme."²⁴

The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of cultivating *Sīla* (morality), *Pāṇātipātādihi vā viramantassa vattapaṭipattiṃ vā purentassa chetanādayo dhammā*.²⁵ *Samādhi* (concentration), and *Paññā* (wisdom).

²² *The Essence of Vishuddhimagga*, II, Mon Dr. Mehm Tin, p. 313.

²³ *Snp*, p. 64: "Mātā pitu upatthānam/ Puttadārassa sangaho/ Anākulā ca Kammantā/ Etam mangala muttamam."

²⁴ *Snp*: "Mātā pitu upatthānam/ Puttadārassa sangaho/ Anākulā ca Kammantā/ Etam mangala muttamam."

²⁵ *Visuddhimagga*, I, p. 12.

Having these three virtues is essential. The threefold training approach involves three practical steps: morality, concentration, and insight/ wisdom. The first step involves morality (*Sīla*). Morality refers to appropriate action that follows established norms and does not bring harm to others or oneself. It can be coded as five moral precepts, eight, two hundred twenty-seven, or three hundred thirty-one in other ways. The goal is to promote peace, convenience, and freedom from the negative effects of actions and words. This refers to social groups and the necessary property for living.

The second component of the three-fold training is concentration (*Samādhi*). *Kusalachittakaggatā Samādhi*²⁶ Constraint the mind to be in a state that promotes achievement in any endeavour. Exactly what is concentration? Many people associate focus with a calm mind, likening it to a log of wood. Concentration encompasses more than just calmness and stability. This statement is based on a speech by the *Buddha*. He described a focused mind as capable of performing well at work. Having a focused mind is essential for success at work.

The third part is insight training (*Paññā*), *Paññā* is *Kusalchittasamyuttarā Vipassanāñāṇaṇaṇi Paññā*²⁷. Which involves practice and drills to gain a comprehensive awareness of the true nature of all things. Normally, we are incapable of knowing anything in its real form.

Our tendency to favour our views or conform to public opinion might lead to inaccurate perceptions of reality. Buddhist practice comprises insight training, the final part of the threefold training, to get a complete grasp of the true nature of things.

III. CONCLUSION

Buddhism has traditionally been seen as a religion of harmony and nonviolence. Buddhists believe that the Buddha (meaning “the awakened”) became aware of universal rules that exist eternally, regardless of whether they were discovered by him. The fundamental law of karma, also known as dependent origination in Buddhism, reveals the true nature of the universe’s existence.

Kamma is a basic doctrine in Buddhism, discovered by the Buddha during his enlightenment. The Buddha developed the doctrine we know today. Buddhists believe that disparity is caused by *kamma*, as well as inheritance, environment, and ‘nature and nurture’. In other words, it is a result of our past and current activities. Under *kamma* law, individuals are responsible for their own lives. He must accept the repercussions of his poor deeds while enjoying the benefits of his good actions.

He can change his future life for the better or worse by taking positive or negative acts. Living by the Law teaches us to be patient, not get enthusiastic, and to work with it to avoid harm and blessings. Impatience can hinder progress.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, III. p. 04.

Suffering serves as a reminder to settle a debt and avoid causing future suffering. Rejoicing allows us to appreciate the sweetness of life and strive to improve ourselves. Patience promotes tranquillity, success, happiness, and security. An understanding person cannot be uneasy about the Law, as it is perfect and just. Uncertainty and lack of confidence indicate a misunderstanding of the law. We are protected under its wings and only have to worry about our actions. The law empowers individuals and boosts their confidence. Confidence promotes calm, pleasure, comfort, and courage. The law protects us wherever we go.

Our actions now will shape our future, just as we have shaped ourselves in the past. Knowing that the future is boundless promotes self-reliance and reduces the need for external assistance, which is ultimately ineffective. According to the Buddha, one may only purify oneself and cannot purify others.

“By oneself alone is a wicked deed done, by oneself is one defiled, by oneself is a wicked deed left undone, by oneself is one purified, purity and impurity come from oneself, (for) no one can purify another.”²⁸

Recognizing the repercussions of our actions, we should avoid doing or saying anything that is not good, pure, and true. Understanding *kamma* can help us avoid harming others and ourselves. By incorporating the *kamma* theory into our lives, we obtain the ability to better guide our future and serve others. Developing good *kamma* can help us overcome obstacles and achieve Peace, our ultimate objective. Every teaching taught by Buddha is beneficial for the welfare of all living beings. The verses given in *Dhammapada* are relevant for establishing peace in the entire world.

“Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred is alone hatred appeased. This is the Law of the Eternal.”²⁹

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²⁸ Dhṛp. 165: “Attanā va katarāṃ pāpaṃ, attanā saṅkilissati,/ attanā akatarāṃ pāpaṃ, attanā va visujjhati,/ suddhī asuddhī paccattarā, nāñño aññaṃ visodhaye.”

²⁹ Dhṛp. 5: “Nā hi verena verāni, sammantidha kudācanāni./ Averaṇa ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano.”

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MICROAGGRESSION AND BUDDHA’S TEACHINGS: A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

This paper examines the intersection of Buddhist teachings and contemporary understandings of microaggression, offering insights into how ancient Buddhist wisdom can address modern social challenges. Through analysis of Buddhist philosophical principles and their application to subtle forms of discrimination, this research explores practical solutions for preventing and addressing microaggressions in diverse settings. The study demonstrates how Buddhist concepts of mindfulness, compassion, and non-violence can be effectively integrated into modern diversity training and institutional policies. Drawing on both classical Buddhist texts and contemporary social psychology research, this paper contributes to the growing field of Buddhist social engagement while providing practical frameworks for creating more inclusive and equitable communities.

Keywords: *Microaggression, religious microaggressions, hate speech, non-harm.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Microaggressions¹ are subtle, often unintentional, verbal or non-verbal slights that perpetuate stereotypes and marginalise individuals. For example, making a comment such as “You speak English so well” to someone from a non-dominant cultural background implies surprise at their linguistic proficiency, reinforcing an underlying stereotype. First introduced by Chester Pierce² and others in the 1970s (Pierce et al., 1977) and expanded upon by Derald Wing Sue and colleagues (2007),³ microaggressions encompass microassaults,

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¹ Kevin L. Nadal (2014): 71.

² Chester M. Pierce, Jean V. Carew, Diane Pierce-Gonzalez, and Deborah Wills (1977): 86.

³ See the article “Disarming Racial Microaggressions: Microintervention Strategies for Targets while Allies, and Bystanders” Derald Wing Sue, Sarah Alsaiddi, Michael N Awad,

microinsults, and microinvalidations. While these acts may appear minor, their cumulative impact on mental and emotional well-being is profound, often reinforcing systemic inequalities.

Contemporary research underscores the complex intersectionality of microaggressions, revealing their multifaceted presence across overlapping dimensions of identity such as race, religion, gender, and sexuality.⁴ This intersectional framework, first conceptualised, illuminates how individuals experiencing multiple marginalised identities face unique and compounded forms of microaggressions. For instance, a Buddhist woman of Asian descent might encounter simultaneous microaggressions related to her gender (being interrupted in professional settings), her religion (assumptions about being inherently peaceful), and her ethnicity (stereotypes about Asian cultural traits). These intersecting experiences create distinct patterns of discrimination that cannot be fully understood by examining each identity category in isolation.

The compounded nature of intersectional microaggressions often intensifies their psychological impact.⁵ When an individual faces multiple, overlapping forms of subtle discrimination, the cumulative effect can be particularly devastating to their sense of self and belonging. For example, a person might experience religious microaggressions⁶ in their workplace while dealing with gender-based microaggressions in their academic environment, creating a pervasive sense of othering across different life domains.

From a broader perspective, microaggressions contribute to *dukkha*,⁷ the pervasive suffering described in Buddhist teachings, as this suffering arises from ignorance, attachment, and aversion – collectively known as the Three Poisons – which are often at the root of microaggressions. Buddhist teachings provide a valuable lens for understanding and mitigating the harm caused by microaggressions. Rooted in the Four Noble Truths⁸ and the Eightfold Path,⁹ Buddhism emphasises non-harming (*ahimsa*),¹⁰ mindfulness (*sati*),¹¹ and compassionate action (*karuṇā*).¹² These principles directly counteract microaggressions by fostering self-awareness, encouraging empathy, and reducing reactive behaviors. For example, mindfulness helps individuals recognize implicit biases before they manifest as harmful actions, while compassion fosters understanding and reduces the likelihood of perpetuating

Elizabeth Glaeser, Cassandra Z Calle, Narolyn Mendez (2019).

⁴ Kimberle Crenshaw (1991): 1241 - 1299.

⁵ William A. Smith, Man Hung and Jeremy D. Franklin (2011): 64.

⁶ Kevin L. Nadal, Katie E. Griffin, Sahran Hamit, Jayleen Leon, Michael Tobio and David P. Rivera (2012): 15 - 37.

⁷ "The Buddha and His Teachings" Venerable Narada Maha Thera (1998): 60.

⁸ Rupert Gethin (1998): 59 - 84.

⁹ *ibid.* 81

¹⁰ Vijayalaxmi Munagala (2015): 55 - 57.

¹¹ "Right mindfulness" Bhikkhu Bodhi (2024).

¹² "The Buddha and His Teachings" Venerable Narada Maha Thera (1998): 247.

stereotypes. Together, these practices cultivate an environment of respect and inclusivity, addressing the root causes of subtle discrimination. The Buddhist approach thus offers practical guidance for addressing the underlying ignorance, attachment, and aversion that fuel microaggressions, fostering a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect.

II. CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF MICROAGGRESSION

In a globalized society with increasing complexity, microaggressions can manifest in nuanced ways, influenced by intersecting identities,¹³ cultural differences, and global power dynamics. Power imbalances play a crucial role in the perpetuation of microaggressions. Individuals from dominant groups often wield social, economic, and institutional power over marginalized groups. These imbalances reinforce stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors. As a result, marginalized individuals find it challenging to voice their concerns or challenge oppressive practices. Power dynamics contribute to microaggressions in several ways, such as normalisation of discrimination,¹⁴ silencing marginalised voices,¹⁵ and institutional reinforcement.¹⁶ Those in positions of power have a critical role in creating more inclusive and equitable environments by fostering Awareness and education, encouraging open dialogue, implementing inclusive policies, leading by example, and providing resources and support (Eden et al., 2024) (Raelin, 2012). By addressing power dynamics and actively working to create inclusive environments, those in positions of power can significantly reduce the prevalence and impact of microaggressions. This approach not only benefits marginalized individuals but also contributes to a more harmonious and equitable society.

Microaggressions are everyday slights, snubs, or insults – verbal, nonverbal, or environmental – that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to individuals based solely on their marginalized group membership (Sue, 2010). Microaggressions, as categorised by Kelley (2021), include microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Microassaults occur when individuals deliberately engage in discriminatory behaviour while maintaining a veneer of subtlety to avoid appearing overtly offensive (Haghighi, 2020). These actions reinforce societal stereotypes and cause significant harm, especially when experienced repeatedly by marginalised individuals. An example of a microassault is deliberately avoiding sitting next to someone of a darker appearance on public transportation, an explicit act of bias that remains subtle enough to maintain plausible deniability. Microinsults are subtle messages of rudeness and insensitivity expressed through verbal or nonverbal statements regarding a person's identity, often interpreted as backhanded compliments (Easy Llama, 2025). For instance, saying "You speak very good English, though

¹³ Jen'nan G. Read and David E. Eagle (2011): 116 - 132.

¹⁴ "The normalization of discrimination: Time to change!" Cheryl Ingram (2018); and, "The harm in silence" Stephanie Priestley (2023).

¹⁵ "The harm in silence" Stephanie Priestley (2023).

¹⁶ Flora (2004) p. 213.

you are Indian” is a microinsult that demeans someone’s identity or background, often unintentionally. Microinvalidations occur when someone’s experiences, feelings, or identity are dismissed or undermined, often unintentionally (Cleveland Clinic, 2022). An example is telling someone, “I don’t think you will succeed in this workplace because of your skin colour,” which discredits their lived experiences and challenges. These forms of microaggressions collectively communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to marginalised individuals based on their group membership. In a contemporary context, they manifest as subtle, often unintentional, words or actions that communicate prejudice or negative attitudes towards members of marginalized groups.¹⁷ Modern understanding emphasises how microaggressions intersect with other forms of oppression like class, ableism, and religious discrimination.¹⁸ The focus has shifted from the intent of the perpetrator to the impact on the recipient.¹⁹ Microaggressions, even when unintentional, can significantly harm the target’s mental and emotional well-being.²⁰ Microaggressions are increasingly seen as part of a larger system of oppression, reflecting and reinforcing systemic inequalities. While race, gender, and sexual orientation remain key areas, contemporary discussions include microaggressions based on making insensitive jokes about religious beliefs or practices.²¹ An exoticisation-themed religious microaggression may occur when someone asks an individual an excessive number of questions regarding any or all aspects of their religion. These types of microaggressions can also occur when people view religions as exotic and/ or trendy (Nadal et al., 2012).

Microaggressions, though subtle and often unintentional, cause significant harm by perpetuating stereotypes and undermining the dignity of individuals.²² Buddhist teachings provide profound insights into addressing this harm by emphasising mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct. From the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16): “They are the noble truth of *dukkha*; the noble truth of the origin of *dukkha*; the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*; and the noble truth of the way to the cessation of *dukkha*.”

The Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*) highlight suffering (*dukkha*) as a universal experience,²³ while the Eightfold Path²⁴ offers practical guidance to mitigate harm, particularly through Right Speech (*sammā vācā*) and Right

¹⁷ “What to know about microaggressions” Anna Smith Haghighi (2023).

¹⁸ “Microaggressions at work: Recognizing & overcoming our biases” Kelly Luc (2018).

¹⁹ See slide 3 “Microaggressions: a guide” (2020).

²⁰ “What to know about microaggressions” Anna Smith Haghighi (2020).

²¹ “Examples of Microaggressions in the Workplace and Tips for Response and Prevention” EVERFI Content Team (2024).

²² “Everyday Stings: The Power and Pain of Microaggressions” Edyta Juda (2015).

²³ Nyanatiloka Thero and Nyanaponika Thero, 1952/1980, p. 52.

²⁴ Walpola Rahula Thero, 1959/ 1974, p. 45.

Action (*sammā kammanta*).²⁵ The emphasis on non-harming (*ahimsa*)²⁶ aligns with the need to counter microaggressions with kindness and understanding, making Buddhism a valuable framework for fostering inclusivity and reducing interpersonal conflict.²⁷ This connection underscores how applying Buddhist ethics can address the root causes of microaggressions, such as ignorance and bias, and promote healing and mutual respect.

2.1. Religious microaggressions

Religious microaggressions²⁸ are subtle actions or comments that marginalise individuals based on their faith, often reinforcing stereotypes or dismissing the diversity of religious experiences. These microaggressions are significant in understanding the broader impact of subtle discrimination because they undermine the cultural and spiritual identity of individuals. Addressing these behaviours is essential for fostering inclusivity and mutual respect in diverse communities. Research identifies six categories of religious-based microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2012):

2.1.1. Endorsing religious stereotypes²⁹: Endorsing religious stereotypes manifests in the assumption that a Buddhist individual is inherently peaceful and serene, which oversimplifies their unique identity. For example, labeling a Buddhist colleague as always calm and composed disregards their individuality. This perspective reflects an attachment to conceptual perceptions (*saññā*) rather than seeing things as they truly are (*dhammatā*), leading to feelings of being misunderstood and undervalued. According to Buddhist teachings, clinging to stereotypes arises from ignorance (*avijjā*), which is one of the root causes of suffering (*dukkha*). Such simplifications not only negate the principle of non-self (*anattā*) in human identity but may also impose psychological pressure, restricting individuals to a fixed image and thereby increasing mental defilements (*kilesa*).

2.1.2. Exoticisation³⁰: Exoticisation manifests in the perception of Buddhist practices, such as *bhāvanā* (meditation), as merely trendy, thereby diminishing their profound cultural and spiritual significance. For example, when meditation techniques are used solely as a wellness trend without an understanding of their doctrinal context, this can distort their true essence. In Buddhist thought, meditation is not merely a means of relaxation but a path to wisdom (*paññā*) and liberation (*vimutti*). Detaching meditation from its foundational teachings risks undermining the principles of mindfulness (*sati*) and clear comprehension (*sampajañña*), reducing a profound practice to a

²⁵ Nārada, Maha Thera, 1998/ 1980, p. 249.

²⁶ Walpola Rahula Thero, 1959/ 1974, p. 45.

²⁷ Theresa Der-lan Yeh (2006): 91 - 112.

²⁸ Kevin L. Nadal, Katie E. Griffin, Sahran Hamit, Jayleen Leon, Michael Tobio and David P. Rivera (2012): 15 - 37.

²⁹ "Metta The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love" Acharya Buddharakkhita (1995).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

superficial tool. This can lead to cultural appropriation and a lack of respect for those who engage in authentic spiritual practice.

2.1.3. Pathologising religious groups³¹: Occurs when certain religious practices are labeled as abnormal or deviant, thereby undermining their validity. For instance, regarding practices such as chanting (*paritta*) or mindfulness meditation (*sati-bhāvanā*) as strange or eccentric, rather than as legitimate spiritual disciplines, reflects a lack of understanding rooted in ignorance (*avijjā*). In Buddhist thought, such misconceptions arise from distorted perception (*saññā-vipallāsa*), reinforcing bias and division. This form of subtle discrimination can delegitimise and stigmatise religious practices, leading to social alienation (*puggala-vivāda*) and internalised stigma within the Buddhist community. Over time, such marginalisation may discourage practitioners from fully engaging in their spiritual path, hindering the development of wisdom (*paññā*) and inner tranquility (*upasama*).

2.1.4. Assumption of religious homogeneity:³² Occurs when all Buddhists are presumed to share identical beliefs and practices, disregarding the diversity within the tradition. For example, expecting all Buddhists to follow the same rituals and doctrinal interpretations fails to acknowledge the distinctions among *Theravāda*, *Mahāyāna*, and *Vajrayāna* traditions, as well as variations within these schools. Such assumptions overlook the richness of Buddhist thought and practice, which is shaped by cultural, historical, and regional influences. This homogenisation can lead to feelings of exclusion and misrepresentation among practitioners whose beliefs or practices do not conform to dominant perceptions, thereby diminishing the recognition of Buddhism's pluralistic nature and the individuality of its adherents.

2.1.5. Assumption of one's own religious identity as the norm:³³ The prioritisation of one's own religious identity as the default standard can lead to the marginalisation of other faith traditions. For instance, scheduling important meetings on *Vesākha* (Buddha's birthday) without acknowledging its significance to Buddhist employees reflects an implicit bias that prioritises certain religious observances over others. This reinforces the perception that non-Christian holidays and practices are less important, contributing to feelings of exclusion (*vippayoga*) and inequality (*asamattatā*). Such oversight not only disregards religious diversity but also undermines the principle of mutual respect (*gāraṇa*) essential for fostering inclusivity in multicultural environments.

2.1.6. Denial of religious prejudice:³⁴ The dismissal of religious prejudice occurs when individuals or institutions ignore or deny the existence of religious bias, thereby perpetuating discriminatory environments. For

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Kevin L. Nadal, Katie E. Griffin, Sahran Hamit, Jayleen Leon, Michael Tobio and David P. Rivera (2012): 24.

³³ Theresa Der-lan Yeh (2006): 17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*: 18.

example, rejecting a complaint about religious discrimination with a statement like, "We don't have religious bias here," without properly investigating the incident, invalidates the lived experiences of those facing discrimination. This lack of acknowledgment obstructs meaningful dialogue (*kathāmagga*) and prevents the resolution of underlying issues. As a result, prejudice (*mānagga*) remains unchallenged, potentially escalating and fostering an unwelcoming and hostile environment (*atithaddhabhāva*), contrary to the principles of right speech (*sammā vācā*) and mutual respect (*gāraṇa*).

By understanding these contemporary scenarios and their impacts, we can better address religious microaggressions and promote a more inclusive environment that respects diverse spiritual and cultural identities. Integrating Buddhist principles like mindfulness and compassion³⁵ can help mitigate these behaviours, fostering a culture of empathy and respect.

2.2. Impact and significance

Research demonstrates that microaggressions, though often perceived as minor incidents, have significant cumulative effects on mental and physical health (Nadal, 2019). Studies have established clear relationships between experiencing microaggressions and intense psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem (Snyder - Yuly, 2017). The chronic stress from repeated exposure to microaggressions can manifest in physical symptoms, including elevated blood pressure, weakened immune responses, and other stress-related health conditions (Haghighi, 2020). Mindfulness-based interventions offer promising approaches for both addressing and preventing microaggressions.³⁶ Research indicates that mindfulness practices can effectively reduce implicit bias and enhance empathetic responses (Brown et al., 2019). For instance, studies of eight-week mindfulness programs show significant reductions in unconscious racial and religious bias among participants. Mindfulness practices also provide valuable tools for those experiencing microaggressions. Studies show that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) techniques³⁷ (Ackerman, 2019) can help individuals develop resilience and coping strategies when faced with discriminatory behaviour³⁸.

From a Buddhist perspective, mindfulness and compassion³⁹ can offer valuable tools for coping with the effects of microaggressions. Mindfulness,

³⁵ "Buddhist Perspectives on Mindfulness and Compassion" Catharine Hannay (2020).

³⁶ See article "An Introduction to the Buddhist Underpinnings of Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Buddha-Nature and Intrinsic Goodness" David Saunders (2016).

³⁷ See section "The 8 Most Popular MBSR Exercises and Techniques" in "Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: The Ultimate MBSR Guide" Courtney E. Ackerman (2017).

³⁸ See section "The Experience of Racism on Behavioural Health Outcomes: The Moderating Impact of Mindfulness" Tamika C. B. Zapolski, Micah T. Faidley, and Marcy Beutlich (2019).

³⁹ See section "What is compassion?" in "What is compassion: A Skeptic's Path to Enlightenment" Scott Snibbe and Stephen Butler (2020).

the practice of being fully present and aware of where we are and what we're doing, can help individuals recognise and process their emotional responses to microaggressions without becoming overwhelmed by them (Hannay, 2022). Compassion, or *karuna*, involves actively seeking to alleviate the suffering of others and oneself. By cultivating compassion, individuals can develop a more empathetic understanding of their own experiences and those of others, fostering resilience and emotional healing (O'Brien, 2009). Incorporating these principles into daily life can help mitigate the mental health impacts of microaggressions, promoting a sense of inner peace and well-being even in the face of adversity.

Contemporary research highlights the profound impact of microaggressions on mental and physical health, illustrating how these seemingly minor slights and insults can accumulate over time, leading to chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and even physical health issues (Lui & Quezada, 2019). These everyday indignities not only diminish the psychological well-being of marginalised individuals but also perpetuate power imbalances, stereotypes, and systemic racism.⁴⁰

To fully grasp the scope of microaggressions and their effects, it is crucial to explore various frameworks for addressing these issues (Cuncic, 2019). One such perspective is offered by Buddhist principles, which emphasise mindfulness and compassion as essential tools for coping with and mitigating the impacts of microaggressions. By integrating these principles into our understanding and response to microaggressions, we can foster a more empathetic and resilient approach to handling these challenges.⁴¹ From a Buddhist viewpoint, mindfulness and compassion provide a path to emotional healing and resilience.⁴² Mindfulness helps individuals recognise and process their emotional responses to microaggressions without becoming overwhelmed. Compassion, or *karuṇā* (O'Brien, 2017), encourages actively seeking to alleviate the suffering of oneself and others, fostering a deeper empathetic understanding of these experiences. This integrative approach not only aids in personal healing but also promotes a more inclusive and supportive community.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to bridge ancient Buddhist wisdom with contemporary social challenges by examining how Buddhist teachings can address and prevent microaggressions while exploring mindfulness practices as tools for recognising and reducing unconscious biases. Its academic significance lies in filling a crucial gap in existing literature by connecting Buddhist philosophy with modern social psychology, offering new perspectives on addressing subtle forms of discrimination⁴³ and contributing to the growing

⁴⁰ "Recognizing Signs of Poor Mental Health" United Nations (2019).

⁴¹ Bhikkhu Anālayo (2021): 2283 - 2297.

⁴² "A Buddhist Approach to Resilience" Jeff Valdivia (2020).

⁴³ Kevin L. Nadal, Katie E. Griffin, Sahran Hamit, Jayleen Leon, Michael Tobio and David

field of Buddhist social engagement studies⁴⁴. By integrating these diverse fields, this research offers a novel approach to understanding and combating microaggressions, which have been largely underexplored in existing academic work. Additionally, this study addresses the lack of comprehensive frameworks that combine spiritual practices with psychological approaches to effectively address microaggressions, thereby offering a unique contribution to both disciplines.

From a practical standpoint, this research develops effective tools for addressing microaggressions in various settings, helps organizations implement mindfulness-based approaches to diversity training, and provides individuals with Buddhist-inspired strategies for personal growth and awareness. By equipping individuals and organisations with these tools, the study promotes a more empathetic and inclusive culture, enhancing social cohesion and reducing instances of discrimination.

The social significance of this study is particularly relevant in today's diverse societies, as it addresses growing concerns about subtle forms of discrimination while offering peaceful, mindfulness-based solutions to social conflicts. By promoting understanding and harmony between different cultural groups, this research contributes to the larger goal of creating more equitable and compassionate communities. Additionally, it supports the development of more inclusive institutional policies through the integration of Buddhist principles into anti-discrimination practices, fostering a supportive environment for all individuals.

This research uniquely addresses the underexplored intersection of Buddhist principles and modern social psychology⁴⁵, offering novel insights into effective strategies for combating microaggressions. By highlighting the practical applications and societal impacts, this study underscores the transformative potential of combining ancient wisdom with contemporary solutions to foster a more just and harmonious world.

IV. TYPES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Modern research has identified three distinct types of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations,⁴⁶ each contributing to the complex web of subtle discrimination. Studies have demonstrated significant psychological impacts, with research by Williams (2019, pp. 38 - 43) linking chronic exposure to microaggressions with increased anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem.⁴⁷ Washington (2022) further established connections between microaggressions and decreased workplace performance, while Farber

P. Rivera (2012): 15 - 16.

⁴⁴ Terry Hyland (2013): 1 - 9.

⁴⁵ "How Buddhism and Modern Psychology Can Enhance Life Quality" (2024).

⁴⁶ Sue et al., 2019, pp. 128 - 142.

⁴⁷ "The Adverse Impact of Racial Microaggressions on College Students' Self-Esteem" Kevin L. Nadal, Yinglee Wong, Katie E. Griffin, Kristin Davidoff, and Julie Striken (2014): 461 - 474.

et al. (2020) documented their negative effects on academic achievement and mental health outcomes. The contemporary framework also recognizes the intersectional nature of microaggressions, affecting individuals across multiple marginalized identities (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1241 - 1299), and their role in perpetuating systemic inequalities through seemingly minor but pervasive interactions (Pérez Huber and Solorzano, 2015, pp. 297 - 320). Chronic exposure to microaggressions can have both a direct impact on health, and an indirect impact when it occurs within a healthcare system. Microaggressions may often be unconscious,⁴⁸ but they reveal underlying biases that can impact the treatment of individuals. The perception of microaggressions negatively correlated to their satisfaction with their counselling and their relationship with their therapists (Hough, 2022).

Medicine, often viewed as purely scientific, is deeply intertwined with societal and cultural beliefs. Historically, it relied heavily on assumptions about people, lacking the evidence-based approach of modern medicine. For centuries, practitioners treated patients based on societal ideas about identity, bodily function, and purpose, rather than objective scientific knowledge.⁴⁹

The Three Poisons (*triviṣa*)⁵⁰ in Buddhist philosophy are fundamental sources of suffering and harmful actions.

As creeping ivy craving grows in one living carelessly. Like this, one leaps from life to life as an ape in the forest seeking fruit.

Whomever in the world this wretched clinging craving routs for such a one do sorrows grow as grass well soaked with rain.

But whoever in the world routs wretched craving hard to quell, from such a one do sorrows fall like water drops from a lotus leaf.

Prosperity to you, I say, to all assembled here! When needing grass's fragrant root, so craving to extirpate. Don't let Māra break you again, again as a torrent a reed!⁵¹

Bhikkhu Bodhi (2005) explained The Three Poisons as root causes of unwholesome actions. Greed/ avarice (*lobha*),⁵² aversion/ hatred (*Dosa*),⁵³ and delusion/ ignorance (*Moha*).⁵⁴ These three factors are also known as

⁴⁸ "How unconscious bias can lead to microaggression" Nari Bowie (2020).

⁴⁹ Dr. Elinor Cleghorn, *ibid*.

⁵⁰ "The Three Institutional Poisons: Challenging Collective Greed, Ill Will, & Delusion" David Loy (2006).

⁵¹ *Dhammapada*, verse 334 - 337.

⁵² See section "What is Lōbha?" in "*Lōbha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga*" Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwaage (2014).

⁵³ See chapter "The characteristics of Dosa" in "Abhidhamma in Daily Life" Nina van Gorkom (2022).

⁵⁴ Damien Keown (2004): 179.

unskilful and unprofitable roots of the mind (*akusala mula*)⁵⁵ (Ubeysekara, 2020).

From the *Akusala Sutta* (Chapter 7): “*Bhikkhus*, there are these three unskilful roots. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion.”

It creates misconceptions about oneself, others, and the world, leading to wrong views, and ultimately, suffering.⁵⁶ In essence, these three poisons are not isolated phenomena but rather intertwined aspects of a single underlying condition of mental afflictions. Ignorance (*avidya*) is a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of reality, which gives rise to all mental afflictions and perpetuates the cycle of suffering (*samsāra*) (Nhất Hạnh, Thích, 1998, Chapter 23). They reinforce each other, creating a powerful force that obscures our true nature and keeps us trapped in the cycle of suffering.⁵⁷ The Three Poisons, through their influence on our thoughts, emotions, and actions, generate negative *karma*⁵⁸ that leads to suffering in future lives.⁵⁹ They obscure our true nature and prevent us from attaining enlightenment, thus perpetuating the cycle of *samsāra*. By cultivating wisdom, developing loving-kindness, and practicing ethical conduct, we can gradually overcome these poisons and break free from the cycle of suffering (Escobar et al., 2024). The degree of the intensity of these roots may vary from mild to intense, resulting in varying degrees of unpleasant results but even those of a mild degree have the potential to become greater in intensity unless an effort is continually made to control them or to eradicate them (Ubeysekara, 2020).

In the *Mūla Sutta* of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (AN 3. 69):

“Monks, there are these three roots of what is unskilful. Which three? Greed is a root of what is unskilful, aversion is a root of what is unskilful, delusion is a root of what is unskilful”

“Greed itself is unskilful. Whatever a greedy person fabricates by means of body, speech, or intellect is unskilful”

“Aversion itself is unskilful. Whatever an aversive person fabricates by means of body, speech, or intellect is unskilful”

“Delusion itself is unskilful. Whatever a deluded person fabricates by means of body, speech, or intellect is unskilful” (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 2005).

In the *Itivuttaka* (93) (2001), the Buddha has likened the three unwholesome roots to fires burning inside:

⁵⁵ AN 3.69: “*Akusalamūlasutta*”.

⁵⁶ “Misconceptions (often referred to as *avidya* or ignorance) are considered one of the root causes of suffering (*dukkha*). Greed (*raga*, *lobha*), aversion (*dvesa*/ *dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). These combine and interact, that manifest in different ways and result in *dukkha*.” In “The Foundations of Buddhism” Rupert Gethin (1998): 74.

⁵⁷ See article “*Samsara*” in Lion’s Roar (2024).

⁵⁸ See Chapter III in “What the Buddha Taught” Walpola Rahula Thero (1974): 32.

⁵⁹ Buswell and Lopez, 2013/ 2014, pp. 546, 59, 68.

Monks, there are these three fires.

The fire of passion,

The fire of aversion,

The fire of delusion. These are the three fires. (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 2001)

Mindfulness of feeling tones (*vedanā*)⁶⁰ refers to the affective quality of experiences – whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral – arising from sensory contact with the environment. In *Āṅuttara-nikāya* (2024): VRI II, 58 (PTS V, 107):

Everything that arises in the mind flows together with sensations.

Therefore, observation of sensations offers a means - indeed the only means - to examine the totality of our being, physical as well as mental.⁶¹

These tones, which vary in intensity, are constructed by our mind and not inherent in the objects we encounter. For example, people may perceive the same object differently based on mood or context. Being mindful of feeling tones is crucial as they arise quickly and influence behaviour profoundly, often spreading to unrelated aspects of our experiences, shaping how we respond to the world (Batchelor, 2019). Thus, *vedanā* can arise in two ways (Pinnaduwa, 2014). The first type is a result of past actions (*kamma*),⁶² experienced as pleasant (*sukha*)⁶³ or unpleasant (*dukkha*)⁶⁴ sensations in the physical body, which may not always be linked to specific actions but to the inherent vulnerability of the physical form. The second arises from attachment to sensory inputs influenced by distorted perceptions (*saññā*).⁶⁵ These distortions depend on one's habitual tendencies (*gati*),⁶⁶ underlying defilements (*anusaya*),⁶⁷ and fetters (*sarīyojana*)⁶⁸ leading to automatic attachment regardless of the sensory input. While discussing related to the topic microaggression, whenever ear meets, a sound arises feeling caused by the ear consciousness (*sotasamphassaja vedana*) (The Doctrine of Patriccasammupada, 2014).

In the *Kamma Nidhāna Sutta* of the *Āṅuttara Nikāya*, the Buddha has stated how the ten unwholesome deeds are conditioned either by greed, hatred or delusion (Kiribathgoda Gnananada Thero, 2025).

Nidāna Sutta (2022): AN 3.112:

Bhikkhus, there are three causes of the arising of *kamma*.

⁶⁰ See the thesis "What the Buddha Felt: A Study of Vedanā in Early Buddhism" (2024).

⁶¹ *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*, the Great Discourse on the Establishing of Awareness, 2024.

⁶² Nārada Maha Thera (1008): 252 - 264.

⁶³ *Ibid.*: 525.

⁶⁴ Sue et al., 2019, pp. 252 - 264.

⁶⁵ "Vedanā (feelings) arise in two ways" Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwa (2014).

⁶⁶ "Gati (habits/character) determine births- samsappanīya sutta" Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwa (2020).

⁶⁷ "Latent Tendencies (anusaya) in Theravada Buddhism" Ari Ubeysekara (2018).

⁶⁸ "Sacrifice, Happiness, and Liberation in the Buddhist Perspective" Niken Wardani, Lasiyo, and Rizal Mustansyir (2023): 2833.

Three things are causes of the arising of *kamma*. Which three? *Alobha* is a source of the arising of *kamma*, *Adosa* is a source of the arising of *kamma*, *Amoha* is a source of the arising of *kamma*.

Whatever *kamma*, bhikkhus, has the nature of *adosa*, is born of *adosa*, is caused by *adosa*, arises from *adosa*, that *kamma* is *kusala*, that *kamma* is blameless, that *kamma* has *sukha* for *vipāka*, that *kamma* leads to the cessation of *kamma*, that *kamma* does not lead to the arising of *kamma* (*Nidāna Sutta*, AN 3.112, 2024).

It has explained five unwholesome deeds related to three roots directly, including False speech (*musavada*),⁶⁹ Slandorous speech (*pisunavacha*),⁷⁰ Harsh speech (*pharusavāca*),⁷¹ Idle chattering (*samphappalāpa*),⁷² and Ill-will (*vyāpāda*) which are conditioned by greed or hatred or delusion (Koralayagama Saranathissna Thero, 2020). Wrong view can be described as a misunderstanding or ignorance of reality, leading individuals to engage in unwholesome actions that should be avoided and neglect wholesome actions that should be performed. Both errors result in negative consequences, as they perpetuate suffering and hinder the development of insight and virtuous conduct. This concept is central to many philosophical and spiritual traditions that emphasize the importance of right understanding for ethical and meaningful living. Further explaining, *vedanā* not as a cause of *taṇhā* but as a cause of *paññā* or knowledge gained through experience (O'Brien, 2018).

Anger or hatred can arise when one encounters negative experiences with people, objects, events, or circumstances. It is often triggered when one receives unpleasant sensory inputs through the six sense doors: seeing (*cakkhu*), hearing (*sota*), smelling (*ghāṇa*), tasting (*jivhā*), touching (*kaya*), and thinking (*mana*)⁷³ (Sayadaw, 2022). Anger can be understood as both a physical and mental response to a perceived or actual threat, regardless of its intensity or timing.⁷⁴ It may manifest in reaction to an event from the distant or recent past or even in response to a current situation. Hatred can also arise from feelings of disappointment, frustration, annoyance, injustice, or any perceived form of loss.⁷⁵ Crucially, the true source of this emotion is often not the external person, object, or situation but the internal state of the individual experiencing it. It is heavily influenced by one's thought patterns now of the incident and the accumulation of previous experiences. Furthermore, hatred can be directed

⁶⁹ See section "Four Factors of Musavada" in "Facts Concerning Five Moral Precepts (#4 - Facts Concerning "Musavada Precept") & Related Story" Ye' Thu Aung (2016).

⁷⁰ "Abstaining from slanderous speech" in Insight Meditation Center (2005).

⁷¹ See section "The Wholesome and the Unwholesome" in "Sammaditthi Sutta: The Discourse on Right View" Ñanamoli Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi (1998).

⁷² "Right Speech – Words with Value" Lynn J. Kelly (2022).

⁷³ "The Six Sense Bases" Sean Oakes (2021).

⁷⁴ See section "What is anger?" in "Cool Down: Anger and how to deal with it" in Mental Health Foundation (2024).

⁷⁵ "The Psychology of Hate" in "Psychology Today" Allison Abrams (2017).

inwardly, towards oneself, particularly when desires remain unfulfilled, or when one faces loss, defeat, uncomfortable feelings, or any personal weakness or disability. This self-directed hatred⁷⁶ is reflective of deeper internal struggles and is often a significant obstacle on the path to personal and spiritual growth.

As explained in *Āghātavinaya Sutta* (AN 5.162):

“And as for a person who is pure in his bodily behaviour & verbal behaviour, and who periodically experiences mental clarity & calm, how should one subdue hatred for him? Just as when there is a pool of clear water – sweet, cool, & limpid, with gently sloping banks, & shaded on all sides by trees of many kinds – and a person comes along, burning with heat, covered with sweat, exhausted, trembling, & thirsty. Having plunged into the pool, having bathed & drunk & come back out, he would sit down or lie down right there in the shade of the trees. In the same way, when an individual is pure in his bodily behaviour & verbal behaviour, and periodically experiences mental clarity & calm, one should at that time pay attention to the purity of his bodily behaviour... the purity of his verbal behaviour, and to the fact that he periodically experiences mental clarity & calm. Thus, the hatred for him should be subdued. An entirely inspiring individual can make the mind grow serene.”

“These are five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely.” (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 2024)

In the *Titthiya Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha has stated that the reason for the development of hatred is inappropriate attention to objects of irritation or unpleasantness. (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 2005b). Hence, hatred is an extreme form of anger that causes profound suffering (Doering, 2024) because it causes so much suffering.

The first thing we can do is accept that the main cause of our anger is the seed of it inside us. Then we must realise that if we don't deal with our anger, it will spill over and hurt others. It's also important to help, rather than punish those who are angry. Anger can never remove anger. Anger can only promote more anger. Only understanding and compassion can put down the flame of anger in us and in the other person. Understanding and compassion are the only antidote for anger (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2020).

The obvious question is: what action should I take if somebody expresses their aggression against me? According to *Akkosa Sutta* (SN 7.2),

Whoever returns insult to one who is insulting, returns taunts to one who is taunting, returns a berating to one who is berating, is said to be eating together, sharing company, with that person. But I am neither eating together nor sharing your company, brahman. It's all yours. It's all yours. (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 1999)

⁷⁶ See “Insecurity, Self-Criticism, and Impermanence” in “Buddhist Perspectives” Paul Fulton (2024).

Even though we may understand that responding to an insult can escalate anger, resisting the urge is often challenging. Rationally, we know that if we don't accept the insult, it remains with the insulter, along with their negative karma. However, if we retaliate, we too inherit bad *karma*. The question is: how can we avoid this cycle when emotions overpower rationality? The answer lies in cultivating mindfulness and emotional regulation⁷⁷, enabling us to pause, reflect, and choose non-reactive responses that align with inner peace and wisdom. A stranger on Facebook posts an insulting comment on our post. Do we respond with the same energy? Likely not. Instead, we might ignore it entirely—neither removing it, debating it, nor escalating the negativity. If a response feels necessary, a measured reply such as, “I understand your perspective, and thank you for sharing. Personally, I see it differently, but I appreciate hearing your thoughts,” maintains civility and defuses tension. This approach prioritizes peace and constructive dialogue over conflict. The antidote to anger is loving-kindness and compassion. If you're angry with someone, you hold them in your heart with loving-kindness and compassion; if you're angry with yourself, you do the same. (Moffitt, 2020)

According to Buddhist teaching, the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*)⁷⁸ are identified as mental factors that hinder progress in meditation and daily life (Fronsdaal, 2020). One of the hindrances is Ill will (*vyāpāda*), which refers specifically to hatred and wishing harm on others but can be thought of broadly as encompassing many manifestations of aversion and negativity (Oakes, 2018). Hatred is the opposite of loving-kindness (*mettā*),⁷⁹ and cultivating kindness and compassion is its primary antidote. Like sensual desire, hatred directs our attention outward, fixating on unpleasant people, situations, or things rather than addressing our inner fears, confusion, or insecurities. This tendency reflects a psychological pattern known as “negativity bias,” a reflexive habit of focusing on the negative. Redirecting our focus inward and nurturing a compassionate state helps counteract this painful energy and fosters a more balanced perspective.

Metta Sutta (AN 11.16) (1995) explains: “Monks, when universal love leading to liberation of mind is ardently practiced, developed, unrelentingly resorted to, used as one's vehicle, made the foundation of one's life, fully established, well consolidated and perfected, then these eleven blessings may be expected.”

The *Dhammapada* emphasizes purifying the mind as essential to moral practice (Min et al., 1984).

⁷⁷ “The Power of Emotions to Override Rational Thought” Bernard Golden (2016).

⁷⁸ “What Are Pañca Nīvaraṇa?” in “Pañca Nīvaraṇa and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma Rāga)” in “Pure Dhamma” Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwaage (2021).

⁷⁹ “Metta The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love” Acharya Buddhārakkhita (1995).

“Abandoning all evil, – entering the state of goodness, and purifying one’s own mind by oneself – this is the Teaching of the Buddha.”⁸⁰

“Enduring patience is the highest asceticism. The Buddhas say that imperturbability (*Nibbāna*) is the most supreme. One is not a renunciate if he hurts another. Only one who does not harm others is a true saint (*samana*).^{81 82}

To refrain from finding fault with others, to refrain from hurting others, to be trained in the highest forms of discipline and conduct; to be moderate in eating food; to take delight in solitude; and to engage in higher thought (which is meditation).⁸³

These teachings highlight the significance of responding to hatred with mindfulness, tolerance, and self-restraint, aligning with Buddhist principles for overcoming negativity and fostering inner peace. Speaking without knowledge or understanding, and without recognising the virtues or merits of a duty, leads to misguided speech and actions. Praising or judging without proper awareness often results in misconceptions (*Micchā Diṭṭhi*)⁸⁴ and perpetuates mythical or false beliefs (*Micchā Diṭṭhika Sutta*, 2024). This highlights the importance of mindful inquiry and discernment in speech and action to align with wholesome practices and avoid negative consequences.

It is also explained, living on the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Atthangika Magga*)⁸⁵ completing the eight elements of good path including Right Understanding/ View (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*),⁸⁶ Right Thoughts/ Resolve (*Sammā Samkappo*),⁸⁷ Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*),⁸⁸ Right Action (*Sammā Kammanto*),⁸⁹ Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*),⁹⁰ Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāmo*),⁹¹ Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*),⁹² and Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*),⁹³ is called to refrain from doing evil, to indulge in doing good, to cleanse one’s mind (Ubeysekara, 2022). These eight principles serve more as guides rather than eight steps to follow in order. Right Understanding begins with comprehending the true nature of self and reality, leading to

⁸⁰ Dhammapada Verse 183.

⁸¹ Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo (2012): 1 – 3.

⁸² Dhammapada Verse 184.

⁸³ Dhammapada Verse 185.

⁸⁴ See section “The Ten Types of *Micchā Diṭṭhi* (Wrong Views)” in “*Micchā Diṭṭhi*, Gandhabba, and Sōtapanna Stage” Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwaage (2017).

⁸⁵ See Chapter V in “What the Buddha Taught” Walpola Rahula Thero (1974): 45.

⁸⁶ “The Buddha and His Teachings” Venerable Narada Maha Thera (1998).

⁸⁷ See “Right Resolve: *Samma sankappo*” in Access to Insight (2005).

⁸⁸ See “Right Speech: *samma vaca*” in Access to Insight (2005).

⁸⁹ See “Right Action: *samma kammanto*” in Access to Insight (2005).

⁹⁰ See “Right Livelihood: *samma ajivo*” in Access to Insight (2005).

⁹¹ See “Right Effort: *samma vayamo*” in Access to Insight (2005).

⁹² See “Right Mindfulness: *samma sati*” in Access to Insight (2005).

⁹³ See “Right Concentration: *samma samadhi*” in Access to Insight (2005).

Right Thought, characterized by non-attachment, loving-kindness, and harmlessness. These wholesome intentions give rise to Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, forming the foundation of ethical conduct. Right Effort involves diligently cultivating wholesome states of mind while simultaneously suppressing unwholesome ones. This process is facilitated by Right Mindfulness, allowing for a clear and unbiased observation of one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. When Right Effort is combined with the sustained focus of Right Mindfulness, it culminates in Right Concentration, a state of deep mental absorption. Like a polished mirror, this concentrated state of mind reflects reality with clarity and accuracy, free from the distortions of greed, aversion, and delusion.

V. BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES ON HARM AND SUFFERING

"Now this, monks, is the noble truth of stress: (1) Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging aggregates are stressful."⁹⁴

Buddhist philosophical principles offer profound insights into harm and suffering. The Four Noble Truths describe suffering (*dukkha*),⁹⁵ its origin in craving (*tanha*),⁹⁶ cessation (*nirodha*),⁹⁷ and the Eightfold Path as the remedy.^{98,99} The Three Poisons – greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*)—perpetuate harm through unwholesome actions.¹⁰⁰ *Karma* highlights how intentional actions shape well-being through consequences. These principles align with social psychology, where mindfulness supports emotional regulation, compassion fosters prosocial behavior, and openness reduces biases (Nhat Hanh, Thich, 1998). Together, they offer practical and ethical paths for reducing suffering.

The Three Poisons in Buddhism – ignorance, attachment, and aversion—are often seen as the root causes of suffering and harm. These poisons can be directly linked to the perpetuation of microaggressions in modern contexts:

(1) Ignorance (*avidyā*): Ignorance, or a lack of awareness, is the primary source of microaggressions.¹⁰¹ When individuals lack understanding or knowledge about other cultures, identities, and experiences, they are more likely to make ignorant or insensitive comments. This ignorance can manifest as stereotypes or prejudices that lead to microaggressions, perpetuating

⁹⁴ Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: SN 56.11.

⁹⁵ See "Dukkha" in Access to Insight (2005).

⁹⁶ See "Tanha" in Access to Insight (2005).

⁹⁷ Ajahn Sumedho (2002): 40 - 45.

⁹⁸ Walpola Rahula Thero, 1959/ 1974, p. 45

⁹⁹ Wardani et al., 2023, p. 2834.

¹⁰⁰ Gethin (1998), p. 74.

¹⁰¹ Trainor (2004), p. 162.

misinformation and harm.

(2) Attachment (*rāga*): Attachment, or clinging to one's own beliefs and identities, can lead to an exclusionary mindset (Definitions for *rāga*, 2025). When people are overly attached to their cultural norms and values, they may unconsciously dismiss or invalidate the experiences of others. This can result in microinsults or microinvalidations, as individuals fail to appreciate the diversity and uniqueness of other people's identities and experiences.

(3) Aversion (*dveṣa*): Aversion, or the tendency to reject or push away what is unfamiliar or uncomfortable, also contributes to microaggressions (Escobar et al., 2024). When individuals experience aversion towards those who are different, they may engage in behaviours that exclude or marginalise others. This can lead to microassaults, where discriminatory actions are taken, albeit subtly, to maintain one's comfort zone and reinforce societal hierarchies.

In modern contexts, these Three Poisons perpetuate harm by fostering environments where microaggressions thrive.¹⁰² Ignorance leads to the spread of harmful stereotypes, attachment to one's own identity creates exclusion, and aversion results in discriminatory behaviours. By addressing these underlying causes through mindfulness and compassion, individuals and communities can work towards reducing microaggressions and fostering a more inclusive and understanding society.

5.1. Buddha's core teachings on subtle forms of harm

Buddhist teachings provide a comprehensive approach to addressing both overt and subtle forms of harm and suffering, promoting a more compassionate and mindful way of living.

(1) The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*):¹⁰³ Right Speech and Right Action encourage ethical behaviour and kind communication, preventing subtle harm.¹⁰⁴

(2) Mindfulness (*satī*): Mindfulness practices help individuals recognize and reduce subtle forms of harm through increased awareness.¹⁰⁵

(3) Compassion (*karuṇā*): Practicing compassion alleviates suffering and fosters a more empathetic response to others' experiences.¹⁰⁶

(4) The Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*): The core of Buddhist teachings, the Four Noble Truths, provide a framework for understanding suffering (*dukkha*) and its cessation.¹⁰⁷

(5) The Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*): The Five Precepts are ethical guidelines

¹⁰² "What Are the Three Poisons? (And How to Work with Them in Buddhism)" in "Mindworks" Sara-Mai Conway (2023).

¹⁰³ "The Six Sense Bases" Sean Oakes (2021).

¹⁰⁴ Walpola Rahula Thero, 1959/1974, p. 45.

¹⁰⁵ Nyanatiloka Thero and Nyanaponika Thero, 1952/ 1980, p. 307.

¹⁰⁶ Walpola Rahula Thero, 1959/1974, pp. 46, 75.

¹⁰⁷ Nyanatiloka Thero and Nyanaponika Thero, 1952/ 1980, p. 110.

for lay Buddhists, which include refraining from harming living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxication.¹⁰⁸

5.2. Right speech (*sammā vācā*)

Using Right Speech (*sammā vācā*) effectively addresses microaggressions by fostering intentional, truthful, and kind communication. Buddhism teaches that avoiding the four forms of wrong speech – lying (*musāvāda*),¹⁰⁹ backbiting (*piśunavācā*),¹¹⁰ harsh speech (*pharusavācā*),¹¹¹ and idle chatter (*samphappalāpa*)¹¹² – purifies both words and the mind. It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of good-will (Bhikkhu Thanissaro, 2000).

Practicing silence when unnecessary to speak and committing to truthfulness and kindness strengthens the purity of speech. This not only enhances societal respect but also aligns one's actions with spiritual principles, paving the way for personal and ethical growth.

According to the Tripiṭaka, well-spoken (*subhasita*)¹¹³ words are those that neither harm others nor cause self-distress. Speech should be truthful, pleasant, and free from evil intent, fostering harmony and understanding. Truth is timeless and serves as the foundation of righteous teachings and the path to liberation (Ireland, 2005). The *Buddha* emphasised that words guiding beings toward nibbana and the cessation of suffering are the most meaningful and profound, encapsulating the essence of compassionate and purposeful communication.

Buddha discovered through personal experience the Middle Path is generally referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*).¹¹⁴ It is also important to develop the quality of not shaking

¹⁰⁸ Nārada, Maha Thera, 1998/1980, p. xiii.

¹⁰⁹ “*Musavada* means lying to others by word, letter or gesture. Lying done by word of mouth is called verbal evil conduct. On the other hand, he who abstains from telling lies will enjoy the benefits which are the opposite of the above evil consequences.” See Footnote: 60.

¹¹⁰ “They speak divisively. They repeat in one place what they heard in another to divide people against each other. And so, they divide those who are harmonious, supporting division, delighting in division, loving division, speaking words that promote division.” in “With Cunda” in “Cundasutta” in Anguttara Nikāya (AN 10.176) Bhikkhu Sujato (2024).

¹¹¹ “Abandoning harsh speech, he speaks words that are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and agreeable to the heart.” Ibid.

¹¹² “Abandoning frivolous speech, he speaks words that are meaningful, valuable, and connected with the Dhamma.” Ibid.

¹¹³ “Monks, speech endowed with four characteristics is well-spoken, not poorly spoken — faultless & not to be faulted by the wise. Which four? There is the case where a monk says only what is well-spoken, not what is poorly spoken; only what is just, not what is unjust; only what is endearing, not what is unendearing; only what is true, not what is false. Speech endowed with these four characteristics is well-spoken, not poorly spoken — faultless & not to be faulted by the wise.” Subhasita Sutta: Well-Spoken (SN 3.3) Bhikkhu Thanissaro (1994).

¹¹⁴ Walpola Rahula Thero, 1959/ 1974, p. 45.

(*Tādi Guna*),¹¹⁵ in eight vicissitudes which are necessarily connected with life in this world (Narada Maha Thera, 2006), indicating that the person's state is indefinable but not subject to change or influences of any sort or not react to microaggression. In *Mangala Sutta (Verse 11)* further explained,

He whose mind does not waver,
by contact with worldly contingencies,
sorrowless, stainless and secure.
This is Blessing Supreme. (2024)

Tādi Guna that one can remain unchanged due to worldly teachings (“*Ashtalokadharmā*” - Shashanawatharanaya, 2025).¹¹⁶

Emotional equanimity (*Tādi Guna*)
Gain and loss, disrepute and fame,
blame and praise, pleasure and pain:
these conditions that people meet
are impermanent, transient, and subject to change.
A wise and mindful person knows them
and sees that they are subject to change.
Desirable conditions don't excite his mind
nor is he repelled by undesirable conditions.¹¹⁷

It is difficult for the one who is not like that to fill the gaps. Hence, Buddha, unwavering in gain and loss, in good and bad, in praise, in humiliation, in happiness and in sorrow, has always shown great kindness to everyone. It is called the *Tādi Guna* in Him.

Gain and loss, fame and disgrace, blame and praise, and pleasure and pain do not occupy their mind. They neither favour gain nor oppose loss. They neither favour fame nor oppose disgrace. They neither favour praise nor oppose blame. They neither favour pleasure nor oppose pain. By letting go of favouring and opposing, they are liberated from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They are freed from suffering. This is the difference between a learned noble disciple and an unlearned ordinary person. It is explained in *Anguttara Nikāya (8.6) Worldly Conditions (2nd): Dutiyalokadhammāsutta*,

Gain and loss, fame and disgrace,
blame and praise, and pleasure and pain.
These qualities among people are impermanent,
transient, and perishable.
An intelligent and mindful person knows these things,

¹¹⁵ “Understanding the Eight Vicissitudes of Buddhism” James Horsfall (2024).

¹¹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012, p. 555.

¹¹⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012, p. 1116.

seeing that they're perishable.
Desirable things don't disturb their mind,
nor are they repelled by the undesirable.
Both favouring and opposing
are cleared and ended, they are no more.
Knowing the stainless, sorrowless state,
they who have gone beyond rebirth
understand rightly.

VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, this research underscores the relevance of Buddhist teachings, particularly mindfulness and compassion, in addressing microaggressions. Mindfulness practices enable individuals to become more aware of their thoughts and actions, helping to recognize and mitigate subtle biases and discriminatory behaviors. Compassion fosters empathy and understanding, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment. Right Speech, another key Buddhist principle, emphasizes the importance of speaking truthfully and kindly, which helps to avoid perpetuating harmful language and microaggressions. By integrating these principles, individuals and organizations can cultivate more equitable and harmonious communities, ultimately reducing the occurrence and impact of microaggressions. This approach aligns with the Buddhist belief that all benefits come to all from time to time, suggesting that fostering a compassionate and mindful society will eventually benefit everyone. Buddhist teachings offer profound insights into modern social challenges, providing practical guidance for reducing harm and fostering inclusivity in diverse societies. Concepts such as Right Speech, non-harming (*ahimsa*), and the quality of not shaking (*Tādi Guna*) help individuals navigate social interactions with greater understanding and kindness. The implications of this research are significant: individuals can develop greater self-awareness and empathy, organizations can implement mindfulness-based diversity training to create supportive work environments, and society can move towards greater harmony and mutual respect among diverse cultural groups. Future research could explore the long-term effects of integrating Buddhist principles into anti-discrimination practices across different cultural contexts, examine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based diversity training programs, and further investigate the intersection of Buddhist teachings and modern social psychology to provide deeper insights into addressing subtle forms of discrimination and fostering a more inclusive society. By delving deeper into these areas, researchers can continue to build on the foundation laid by this study, offering innovative solutions for combating microaggressions and promoting social cohesion.

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HOW BUDDHISM IS HELPING US TO MAINTAIN THE “WORLD PEACE” THROUGH REFINING OUR “INNER PEACE”

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Astract:

This paper explores how Buddhism fosters world peace by cultivating inner peace. Buddhism defines peace not merely as the absence of violence but as a state of mental tranquility that radiates outward. By practicing mindfulness, meditation, and ethical living, individuals can overcome suffering and develop a compassionate outlook that promotes harmony in society. The study highlights the Buddhist principles of non-violence (*ahimsā*), interconnectedness, and environmental responsibility, emphasizing that human actions significantly impact global well-being. The paper also examines Buddhism's role in addressing ecological crises through sustainable living and ethical consumption. Furthermore, it discusses the Buddhist concept of peace, which integrates social justice, harmony with nature, and moral discipline. The research underscores that inner transformation through the Noble Eightfold Path can lead to a cooperative, non-violent, and sustainable world. Ultimately, the paper argues that adopting Buddhist principles can serve as a practical guide for individuals and societies to cultivate peace, balance, and environmental stewardship in the modern world.

Keywords: *Buddhism, world peace, inner peace, mindfulness, non-violence, ahimsā, environmental ethics, Noble Eightfold Path, sustainability, compassion.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of “peace” is demarcated and understood in various ways. Understanding peace as absence of violence is a limited vision. Peace covers happiness and harmony among living beings. In an extensive understanding, peace is the nature and goal of every responsive being. Being peaceful is existing in attachment with oneself and with every living being. Peace is inseparable

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but risk anywhere can be a menace to peace everywhere. Buddhism envisages peace as an inner state of mental tranquillity that spreads outward. Achieving a state of inner peace could be an inspiration to all. Buddha conquered inner peace by the exercise of meditation, which encouraged him to work for world peace. In most of his education, Buddha has highlighted that the practice of *vipāsanā* removes mental defilements, which are, according to him, the causes of anguish and restiveness. Once a person overpowers suffering, he understands inner peace. Inner peace ventures itself outward, towards the household, groups and the larger humanity. This guarantees peace and concord in the outer world. Thus, world peace can be accomplished through inner peace. This piece presents the existing latent of this hypothesis based on Buddhist understanding. Buddha developed a source of motivation to all humankind as he achieved peace of mind. This study talks about how psychological desecrations can be evacuated, how an individual sighting the good will of mind, and how inner peace may lead on the way to world peace.¹

Buddhism itself is a peaceful green ecological religion. It strongly expresses human recognition with nature. Buddhists consider that all things, including humans, survive by their interrelationship with all other parts of nature. To think of one's self as cut off from the rest of nature is being impractical.²

According to José Kalapura: "The Buddha taught that respect for life and the natural world is essential. By living simply one can be in harmony with other creatures and learn to appreciate the interconnectedness of all lives. The simplicity of life involves developing openness to our environment and relating to the world with awareness and responsive perception. It also enables us to enjoy without possessing, and mutually benefit each other without manipulation."³

Buddhist teachers and masters continually remind us of the significance of living in tune with the environment and respecting life.

Buddhist precepts emphasize the importance of seeking a right livelihood, a vital facet of which is anxiety for the life of all creatures.⁴ This puts importance on *ahiṃsā* (non-violence). This is the first of the five precepts of Buddhist life and a foremost rule of Jainism. In practice, Buddhists suppose that it is the act of killing or hurting an animal which is harmful, but not the eating of meat that somebody else has provided.

The Buddhist Emperor Asoka the Great established hospitals for both

¹ Sharma Netra P. "From Inner Peace to World Peace: Buddhist Meditation in Practice" Journal of International Affairs, III, (2020), p. 133 - 144, <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/joia/article/view/29089>.

² Dalai Lama: *Environmental concerns: Buddhist responses*; <http://www.religioustolerance.org>, p.1.

³ White, Robert A; "Spiritual Foundations of an Ecologically Sustainable Society," The Journal of Bahāi Studies, Vol. 7, number 2 (1988), <https://www.bahai-studies.ca>, 1995, p. 47 - 74.

⁴ McDonagh, Sean; "To Care for the Earth" Geoffrey Chapman, 1989, p.1. <http://www.cbcew.org.uk>,

humans and animals. He insisted on kindness to animals, and forbade their killing even for food.

Buddhism teaches that if we desire to save the surroundings, we must first scrutinize our lives to decide how our self-deification is destroying the world by depleting, overpopulating, and polluting the atmosphere.⁵

II. THE BUDDHIST APPROACH TO SOLVING THE GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Compassion is the foundation for a balanced outlook of the whole world and of the atmosphere. The use of the “save and not waste” approach means that anything in the environment is blemished or exhausted. Gratuitous annihilation upsets the fundamental equilibrium of life. Environmentalism is rebuilt through the philosophy of Sarvodaya (uplift of all), which is based on loving kindness (*mettā*), compassionate action (*karuṇā*), and altruistic joy.⁶

Suval Sivaraksa and Aubrey Meyer have recommended the following modifications of the Buddhist Four Noble Truths to make them relate to environmentalism:

(1) Climate change is a reality. It is the source of flooding and drought, desertification and loss of land. (2) Climate change is caused by over-consumption of fossil fuels, loss of soil, and excessive herds of livestock. Individual over-consumption in the global North is an expression of greed and a fear of loss. Fear and greed are root causes of all suffering. Capitalism thrives on individual fear and greed. (3) The climate we have to change is the climate of greed and fear, in which consumerism and profiteering can thrive. (4) To overcome suffering, start at home, with yourself. Ask yourself: Where can I cut down my consumption? How can I repay my carbon debt to my children’s children? Plant trees. Don’t fly. Eat local and organic foods⁷.

2.1. Peaceful Buddhist solution to environmental problems

The Buddha’s teachings did not descend from Heaven but were developed for the benefit of humanity. As a result, Buddhism is the way to resolve human issues, as well as ecological problems.

Of late, we have come to live in a world full of intimidation such as area conflicts among different civilizations and ecological pollution. Tackled with a world full of these harms, we must discover a method to save ourselves from all these hazardous conditions. Buddhism offers the pathway and resolution – the way shown to us around 2552 years ago. This way is Buddhism.

⁵ Dalai Lama: *Environmental concerns: Buddhist responses*; <http://www.religioustolerance.org>, p.1.

⁶ Kalapura, José; *Science-Religion Dialogue & Ecology: An Asian perspective*, <http://www.ctns.org>, p.1.

⁷ Schut, Michael and Barnett, Tanya Marcovna; “*The Cry of Creation*” Earth Ministry, <http://earthministry.org>, 2003, p.1.

Since economic reimbursement became the ruling force overlooking fundamental social principles, human actions have become faster and more atrocious in their communication with communities and the world. Holy considerations as well as ethical and human factors are deracinating. The younger generations rising in such surroundings, will ultimately be physically over-fed but mentally disabled since they do not seize the true faith to care and educate them.⁸ This disability is deplorable. Buddhism desires to converse and share this concern with all societies.

It is not only just that we have become conscious of the pending ecological disaster which gravely threatens the solidity of the world. We have been aware of this crisis for a long time and now the matter has come to trouble us as a solemn catastrophe. The anxiety today should not be of finding faults, or condemning by terming the subject as correct or incorrect, just or unjust. We need to seek its causes and find resolutions to re-establish the ecological stability for the posterity's welfare.⁹

It is essential to forecast the consequences in the absence of any sober involvement in this regard. Ecological pollution could happen everywhere, at any time. The lives of hundreds of millions of people will be finished as this crisis reaches its highest point. Consequently, the significance of a clean and healthy atmosphere for our living conditions cannot be disregarded anymore, which at present appears a luxurious concept.¹⁰

Confronted with never-ending distress, religions were founded bearing the distinctiveness of "The Saviors". Religions are not just mere ideas created for people to take refuge when they have complications, but they play a very vital role in modifiable human behaviours. Buddhist philosophy directs people to truth, goodness, beauty; it directs the world to peace, impartiality, comfort, happiness, and a healthy atmosphere to live in. Buddhism guides human beings to do good actions and lead a pleasant-sounding life with one's surroundings.¹¹

To conclude, during forty-nine years of preaching, the Buddha undoubtedly said that he had taught only two truths: pain and the ending of pain.

Ecological pollution disturbs the ecological equilibrium, which becomes a reason of anguish. Taking action to save our atmosphere from its current state of carelessness and mistreatment, means ceasing sufferings in the long run. Buddha wanted to use his knowledge to direct people to seek tranquillity and joy in healthy environments.¹²

⁸ Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, 2009, <http://blag.biz>, p.1.

⁹ Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, 2009, <http://blag.biz>, p.1.

¹⁰ Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, 2009, <http://blag.biz>, p.1.

¹¹ Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, 2009, <http://blag.biz>, p.1.

¹² Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, 2009, <http://blag.biz>

Buddhism is not only a faith for people to trust and to pray for an improved future, but it is the religion of perception which contains sensible methods to help human beings to change their complexity and their distress for themselves, for their families and the society. Overcoming the present state of ecological pollution means a joyful life for mankind. Buddhism is the process of alteration, the technique leading to the cessation of suffering, enlightenment, and happiness. If we wish to find the way to cessation of suffering, enlightenment and gladness, we must vigorously take part in caring for the living environment. We must practice the “Noble Eightfold Path” as promulgated by the Buddha. We must apply the “Noble Eightfold Path” instruction as a medicine for universal tribulations, including the environment issue. The “Noble Eightfold Path” instruction is one of the fundamental foundations of Buddhism and consists of:

- (1) Right View: to see and to know things as they are. This means to see the importance of living environment.
- (2) Right Thought: to think rightly. This means we have to think of things beneficial for the environment.
- (3) Right Speech: speaking rightly. This means we only speak useful words which are good for transforming environmental conditions.
- (4) Right Action: activities which do not harm any man or animal, and bring happiness. Not doing bad deeds, nor polluting the environment.
- (5) Right Livelihood: making a livelihood rightly. We must lead a way of life that does not harm any man or any animal, or destroy nature.
- (6) Right Effort: four diligences, which are four laborious actions to weaken the bad intentions, to strengthen good ones, to do less harmful deeds for the environment and to increase what is good for it.
- (7) Right Mindfulness: to contemplate justly, to keep what is good for the environment in our mind.
- (8) Right Concentration: to meditate rightly.¹³

If we make exercise of the light of “Noble Eightfold Path” to mirror upon the environmental troubles, then we practice in harmony with these eight right practices, and we would see the ground roots of the sorry state of environmental pollution.¹⁴

By considering belongings as they are, and not being puzzled by mixing mind’s eye, we could know the root of initiation and interconnectedness of all things. We would scrutinize that all human actions have shared influences and are synchronized by the law of Cause and Effect”. For example, if we make use of natural possessions hastily, we poorly influence the public environment. But when we concern “right view” and “right thought” (wisdom), we control our actions, our way of view, our verbal communication and our actions. This means we alter wrong deed, wrong thought, and wrong speech, which are the causes of misery. We must produce happiness for everybody because we have

blag.biz, 1.

¹³ Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, 2009, <http://blag.biz>, 1.

¹⁴ Nguyen, Thuat, *Buddhist environment-related values*, <http://blag.biz>, Vietnam, 2009, p.1.

the “right speech” and “right action” (precepts). When we study the precepts we attain wisdom, this means we have “right thought”, for “right thought” is “right concentration”. Right thought is the solution to open the door of alteration, is the fruit of practice. Having right thought means causing no environment contamination, causing no environmental inequity; and this also means there is no neutrality in sharing natural wealth among the different countries.

The “Right thought” of the “Eightfold noble path” is an effective therapy for the current environmental problems¹⁵.

2.2. The main purpose of Buddhism is peaceful mankind

The main purpose of Buddhism is to scrutinize how human consciousness becomes a root source of woe and how it can be addressed. This paper explores how the study of human consciousness contributes to inner peace. The analysis suggests inner peace as a non-dualistic peace grounded on the exercise of numerous functions of mind – meditative mind, a deep intellectual change framed by an inter-reliant, imbuing understanding of reality, and concerned mind – in a collaborative way. Put simply, inner peace means growing towards an ultimate inseparability between our well-being and happiness and that of others, which motivates us to make an effort to fulfil the basic requirements of all and endorse our self-determination and justice and that of others likewise.¹⁶

Buddhism is not just a faith of the past or a mere belief as many have thought, but it is a time-tested scientific religion and way of life which, in the framework of the present world-situation, is more applicable today than ever earlier for founding world peace.¹⁷

Buddha has been a great strength for peace in the world. Buddha’s plan of peace, self-sacrifice, kindness and help moulded the lives of many saints in medieval India while in contemporary India, too, some great leaders like Gandhi, Nehru and Narendra Modi have undeniably been guided by Buddha’s education. The stated foreign policy of India was based on *pañcasīla*, in itself a Buddhist term, which permits for the likelihood of peaceful co-existence amongst people of diverse thoughts.

Buddhism has a close association with peace. In its extended history, we hardly find any evidence of violence, killings, religious hatred. Buddhism exercises only one sword, the sword of insight and recognises only one foe, i.e. ignorance.¹⁸

¹⁵ Nguyen, Thuat, *Buddhist environment-related values*, <http://blag.biz>, Vietnam, 2009, p.1.

¹⁶ Tanabe Juichiro; *Buddhism and Peace Theory: Exploring a Buddhist Inner Peace*, International Journal of Peace Studies, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2016, https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol21_2/Tanabe%20FINAL.pdf, p.1.

¹⁷ Morgan, Kenneth W. (ed.) ‘*The Path of the Buddha*’, Ronald Ross Press, New York, 1956, p. 12.

¹⁸ Saksana, Rakesh, *Buddhism and Its Message of Peace*, <https://www.ayk.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SAKSANA-Rakesh-Buddhism-and-Its-Message-of-Peace.pdf>, p.477.

In conclusion, we need a cooperative development. We have to modify our way of life. We are capable of doing incredible things. There are a lot of things we can do mutually.¹⁹

Buddhism considers human thought to be of great significance in molding one's mind preceding deed. Green Buddhism advocates using the Buddha's knowledge for human mind alteration and preventing their dealings. The healthy living atmosphere is necessary for pleasant-sounding human existence, and everybody should be made conscious of caring and preserving it. To keep our green environment clean and fresh, it is very important to consider mind alteration as a primary condition.

The Buddha gave us a living prototype and jewels of his wisdom (*Dhamma*) which are highly valuable for all living beings. But it could only be used successfully if we are always conscious and practice the Buddha's teachings altogether. We must practice the principle “not to kill” as taught by the Buddha – not killing animals, plants, trees, and even rocks. We must respect their subsistence and use our natural wealth wisely. Consequently, our surroundings will not be threatened, a healthy living environment would survive and humanity would prosper.²⁰

2.3. Buddhist concept of peaceful nature

Nāgārjuna believed that for a structure where emptiness is possible, it is also possible to have functionality, and since functionality is probable, emptiness is also possible. So, when we converse about nature, the ultimate nature is emptiness. The meaning of emptiness or *Śūnyatā* is not the emptiness of survival but rather the emptiness of proper or free existence, which means that things exist by trust upon other factors.²¹

So, whether it is the surroundings that are settled, or the residents, both of them are tranquil of four or five fundamental elements. These elements are earth, wind, fire, water, and vacuum, that is space. About space, in the *kālachakra tantra* there is a mention of what is known as the atom of space, particles of space. So that forms the middle force of the entire phenomenon. When the entire system of the universe first evolved, it evolved from this middle force, which is the particle of space, and also a system of the universe, and would dissolve eventually into this particle of space. So, it is based on these five vital elements that there is a very close inter-relatedness or interrelation between the habitat that is the natural atmosphere and inhabitants, the sentient beings living within it.²²

¹⁹Nguyen, Thuat; *Buddhist environment-related values*, <http://blag.biz>, Vietnam, 2009, p.1.

²⁰Quang, Thich Gia; *Buddhist contribution to solving environmental problems*, <http://blag.biz>, 2009, p.

²¹Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p.1.

²²Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p.1.

Also, when we have a discussion of the elements, there are internal elements which are existent intrinsically within sentient beings; they are also of different levels, some are delicate and some are coarse.

So eventually, according to Buddhist tradition, the innermost subtle realization is the sole sort of creator, itself consisting of five elements, very subtle forms of elements. These subtle elements serve as conditions for producing the internal elements, which form sentient beings, and that in turn causes the subsistence or evolution of the external elements. So, there is a very close interdependence or Interrelationship between the environment and the inhabitants.²³

Surrounded by the connotation of interdependency, there are many different levels that things are dependent upon casual factors, or upon their own parts, or the conceptual mind, which actually gives the label, the designation.

Many people say that basic human nature is something violent. But the truth is exactly opposite. If we look at different mammals, say those animals such as tigers or lions that very much depend on others' lives for their basic survival, these animals, because of their basic character, have a special structure, their teeth and long nails, like that. So, those peaceful animals, such as deer, which are entirely herbivorous, their teeth and nails are something different; gentler. So, from that point of view, we human beings belong to the gentle category, but it is not so our teeth, our nails, these are very sharp. So, we can say, basically human beings have a non-violent nature.²⁴

Also, when it comes to the question of human survival, we can say human beings are social animals. To continue to exist, we need other companions; without other human beings, there is merely no possibility to survive, that is nature's law that is nature.

Since we can say that human beings are fair, we can also say that the human approach towards the environment should be gentle. Therefore, we can also say that not only should we keep our relationship with our other fellow human beings very kind and non-violent, but it is also very imperative to expand that kind of outlook to the natural environment. So, we should all be concerned for our environment.

There is another perspective. It is not an issue of principles or ethics. It is a matter of our endurance. Not only this generation, but for other generations, the environment is somewhat very essential. If we exploit the natural environment recklessly, we might gain short-term benefits, but in the long run, both we and future generations will suffer. So, when the environment changes, climatic conditions also change. When it changes dramatically, economic structures and many other things also change, even our physical body. So, we can bear

²³ Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p.1.

²⁴ Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p. 1.

the great effect from that change. So, from that perspective this is not only a problem of our survival.²⁵

As a result, to reach more effective results and to achieve something in the protection, conservation and preservation of the natural environment, first of all, it is also very vital to bring about internal balance within human beings themselves. Since carelessness of the environment - which has resulted in lots of damage to the human community - came about by unawareness of the very special importance of the environment, it is very important that first of all to implant this knowledge within human beings. So, it is very essential to teach or tell people about its importance to bring one's own benefit.

Then, one of the other most significant is the importance of sympathetic thought. Even from one's own self-interested belief, we need other people. So, by showing apprehension for other people's welfare, sharing other people's suffering, and by helping other people, ultimately one will gain profit. If one thinks only of oneself and forgets about others, in the end one will lose. This also is something like nature's law. It is quite simple. If you do not show a smile to other people, and show some kind of bad look or like that, the other side will also give a similar response. Other way, if you show other people a very sincere and open attitude, there will also be a similar reply. So, it is quite simple logic. Everybody wants friends and does not want enemies. The proper way to create friends is through a warm heart and not just simply money or power. Friends built on power or wealth are something else entirely - they are not true friendships.

So, if we think more extremely, if we are going to be selfish, then we should be wisely selfish, not narrow-minded selfish. From that perspective, the key thing is the sagacity of universal responsibility that is the real source of potency, the real source of happiness.²⁶

From that viewpoint, if in our generation we abuse every available thing: trees, water, mineral resources or anything, without bothering about the next generation, about the future, that's our guilt. So, if we have a true intelligence of universal responsibility, as the central motivation and principle, then from that course our relations with the environment will be well balanced. Similarly, with every feature of relationships, our relations with our neighbours, our family neighbours, or country neighbours, will be balanced from that direction.

So, when we utter environment, or conservation of environment, it is related to many things. Eventually the decision must come from the human heart. So, the key point is genuine sagacity of universal responsibility which is based on love, compassion and clear awareness.²⁷

²⁵ Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p. 1.

²⁶ Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p.1

²⁷ Dalai Lama; *A Buddhist Concept of Nature*, <http://www.dalailama.com>, New Delhi, 1992, p.1.

2.4. Concept of peace in Buddhism

The perception of peace or *śanti* in Buddhism signifies both inner and outer peace. Buddhism mentions peace (*śanti*) endorsing non-violence (*ahimsā*) in humanity since its beginning. It is a religion of peaceable co-existence and a philosophy of insight. A story of non-violence in Buddhist history is described in *Aṅgulimāliya Sūta*, how a serial killer eventually comes to the right pathway and becomes Buddha's devotee. In the third revolution of the wheel, he educated the canon of (*tathāgatagarbha*) the Buddha nature, which means all perceptive being has the potential to achieve Buddhahood. In his canon, he highlighted the peaceful cohabitation among all sentient beings and the natural atmosphere. The idea of peace in Buddhism here has both negative and positive denotations. In its negative sense, peace is a nonappearance not only of war and conflict but also of "structure violence" such as social injustice, social inequality, the violation of human rights, the annihilation of ecological balance, etc. In its positive sense, peace means it incorporates within itself the absenteeism of conflict as well as the presence of harmony.²⁸

2.5. Importance of peace and humanity in Buddhism

Buddhists accept as true that the Buddha (meaning "the awakened") roused to the laws of the universe, which are said to be functioning perpetually, whether the Buddha revealed them or not. The most important among these laws is the law of *kamma*, or, in Buddhist lingo, dependent origination, which elucidates the genuine ailment of things that occur in the universe. In its modest straightforward form, dependent origination claims that anything (as well as sentient and insentient beings) can only occur concerning everything else; if the causes of its existence vanish, then it ceases to exist. Nothing can exist on its own and everything is reliant on other things. All elements, objects, marvels are thus connected right and circuitously to one another in the universe. Any alteration in this vast interconnected existence would ultimately exert influence on everything else. Derived from the opinion of dependent origination is the Buddhist interpretation of the cosmic world and the human being.²⁹

The Buddha's education, though around a wide range of multifaceted belief systems, started with the Buddha's first preaching which is predictably equated with the essence of his teaching – the Four Noble Truths (*caturāryasatya*). The first two truths separate the causes of violence and conflict and the suffering caused thereby: First, life inexorably encompasses suffering/ dissatisfaction (*dukkhasatya*). Second, suffering/ dissatisfaction initiates in desires (*samudāyasatya*).

The third and the fourth advise the cure for this unpleasant way of existing,

²⁸ Gurung, Puspa Bahadur, *Review on Buddhism for Peace and Conflict Resolution*, Research Nepal Journal of Development Studies, Nepal, Year 6th, Issue 1st, 2023, p. 66 - 67.

²⁹ Yeh, Theresa Der-lan, *The Way To Peace: A Buddhist Perspective*, International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 11, Number 1, Spring/Summer, https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol11_1/11n1Yeh.pdf, 2006, p. 92.

that is, how to endorse a peaceful way of living and eventually live in peace: Third, suffering/ dissatisfaction will cease if all desires cease (*nirodhasatya*). Fourth, this state can be understood by engaging in the Noble Eightfold Path (*maggasatya*).

In the varying world of today, Buddhism has a boundless deal to contribute in establishing peace. It offers a revolutionary principle of peace by way of a notion of commonwealth of *Dhamma*. Though the message of peace is spread all over in Buddhism, we may make a passing orientation to some of the initial Buddhist scriptures as well as later *Mahāyāna* philosophical and literary works, which cover precise reference to peace. Among the earlier works *Kimsita sutta* of the *cūlavagga* states that whosoever observes the *Dhamma* by Buddha's traditions and achieves the essence of acquaintance through meditation is established in peace. The three *suttas* of the *Mahāvagga* (*Sundarika Bhāradvāja*, *Magha* and *Salla*), maximum of the *suttas* of *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the whole episode of the *Pārāyanavagga* define the Buddhist commencement of peace as one's individual fulfilment of complete mental freedom by one's endeavour of renouncing craving, all philosophical canons and religious ceremonies. Similarly, later *Mahāyāna* works describe the Bodhisattva as an epitome of *Mahākaruṇā*. *Āśvaghoṣa's Vajrasūcī* pertinently shows how *Mahāyāna* Ācāryas tried to rise above the differences of caste, colour and creed, in harmony with Buddha's knowledges, to found peace within the state.³⁰

2.6. *Ahimsā* or non-violence

Buddhism is a gospel of amity and non-violence. Non-violence is a way of life free from all extremes of craving such as anger, enmity, pleasure, and pain. True peace derives from non-violence, which is a rational and mighty strength. The practice of non-violence is life-affirming, which leads to human unity, progress and peace. Non-violence explains one to live in harmony with others and with oneself. It needs devotion to high values of truth and self-control.

Buddhism is measured to be an applied religion of peace and non-violence. The four *Brahmavihāras*, viz. Friendliness, Compassion, joy, and equanimity, which are components of Right Mindfulness, lean towards endorsing global wellbeing. Further, the Bodhisattva ideal is based on selfless and sacrificing spirit, the empathetic and compassionate attitude of the Buddha towards the whole mankind, and the ideologies of *Ahimsā* or Non-violence, forbearance and philanthropical stance all tend to endorse peace.³¹

No one can afford to overlook the non-violent strategy and social policy introduced by the Buddha. The Buddhist *saṃgha* is a true force of non-violence. Buddha probably understood that one individual educating one's mind was not enough, but effort was to be made to discipline the minds of millions of

³⁰ Saksana, Rakesh, *Buddhism and Its Message of Peace*, <https://www.ayk.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SAKSANA-Rakesh-Buddhism-and-Its-Message-of-Peace.pdf>, 2015, p. 479 - 480.

³¹ Saksana, Rakesh, *Buddhism and Its Message of Peace*, <https://www.ayk.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SAKSANA-Rakesh-Buddhism-and-Its-Message-of-Peace.pdf>, 2015, p. 482.

human beings. Hence, he decided to create a force of disciples wearing saffron robes (*cīvara*) and with shaven heads- an army of non-violent warriors whose combat was to defeat the self. The belief of Non-violence ventures an ideal of worldwide peace.³²

2.7. Happiness, unhappiness and *Nibbāna*

The goal of Buddhist contemplation is *nibbāna*. Humans strive towards the peace of *nibbāna* and away from the complications of the physical realm and the endless cycle of habits. *Nibbāna* is a goal that can be realized in this period. Humans don't have to wait until he/ she die to know if it's real.

The senses and the corporeal world are the realm of birth and death. Take sight, for example: it depends on many factors – whether it's day or night, whether or not the eyes are healthy, and so on. Yet we become very steadfast to the colours, shapes and forms that we notice with the eyes, and we detect with them. Then there are the ears and sound: when we hear pleasing sounds we seek to hold onto them, and when we hear unpleasant sounds, we try to turn away. With smells: we seek the pleasure of fragrances and pleasant odours, and try to get away from unpleasant ones. Also with flavours: we seek delicious tastes and try to avoid bad ones. And with touch: just how much of our lives is spent trying to escape from physical uneasiness and pain, and seeking the delight of physical sensation? Finally, there is thought, the discriminatory consciousness. It can give us a lot of pleasure or a lot of misery.

These are the senses, the sensual world. It is the cycle of birth and death. Its very nature is *dukkha*, it is defective and unsatisfying. You'll never find picture-perfect happiness, satisfaction or peace in the sensual world; it will always bring misery and death. The sensual world is unsatisfactory, and so we only suffer from it when we imagine it to satisfy us.³³

III. Conclusion

I go to the Buddha for refuge. I go to the *Dhamma* for refuge. I go to the Sangha for refuge.³⁴ As we continue to practice and begin to realize the depth of Buddhist teachings, it becomes a real joy to take these refuges, and even just their recitation inspires the mind.³⁵ Through Buddhism, we've learned to face ourselves, our desires, and our excitements. We can handle things with compassion, through meditation and the deeper scrutiny of the nature of self.³⁶

³² Saksana, Rakesh, *Buddhism and Its Message of Peace*, <https://www.ayk.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SAKSANA-Rakesh-Buddhism-and-Its-Message-of-Peace.pdf>, 2015, p. 482 - 483.

³³ Sumedo, Ajahn, *Now is the Knowing*, <https://www.buddhanet.net/nowknow3/>, 1996, p. 1.

³⁴ Buddhāṃ Saranam Gacchāmi: "*Buddhaṃ saranam gacchāmi / Dhammaṃ saranam gacchāmi / Saṅghaṃ saranam gacchāmi.*"

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.1.

³⁶ *How to find inner peace in this crazy world?*, https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/pde2zh/how_to_find_inner_peace_in_this_crazy_world/?rdt=37051, 2022, p.1.

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BUDDHISM: THE QUINTESSENCE TOWARDS JOURNEY FROM INNER PEACE TO WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

Buddhism, a religion founded over 2,600 years ago by Siddhartha Gautama, teaches the pursuit of inner peace through practices such as meditation, mindfulness, and compassion. This journey inward towards self-awareness and enlightenment is essential in the path towards achieving world peace. At the core of Buddhism lies the belief that peace can only be achieved when individuals find peace within themselves. This inner peace is attained through the cultivation of virtues such as loving-kindness, compassion, and equanimity, which in turn leads to a harmonious relationship with oneself and others.

Through the practice of meditation and mindfulness, individuals can quiet the mind and connect with their inner selves. This introspection allows for the acknowledgment and acceptance of one's thoughts, emotions, and experiences. By embracing these aspects of oneself, individuals can develop a deeper understanding of their suffering and the suffering of others. This empathy and compassion towards oneself and others foster a sense of interconnectedness and unity, leading to a more peaceful coexistence with the world around them.

As individuals progress on their journey towards inner peace, they begin to recognize the impermanence and interconnectedness of all things. This realization shifts their perspective towards a more holistic view of the world, where individual actions and intentions have far-reaching consequences. The practice of mindfulness allows individuals to act with greater awareness and intention, making choices that are rooted in compassion and kindness. This ripple effect of positive actions and intentions has the potential to create a more peaceful and just society, where conflicts are resolved through dialogue and understanding rather than violence and aggression.

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In conclusion, Buddhism offers a transformative journey from inner peace to world peace. By cultivating virtues such as compassion, mindfulness, and equanimity, individuals can create a more peaceful and harmonious world. Through the practice of meditation and introspection, individuals can develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others, leading to a more compassionate and empathetic relationship with the world around them. Ultimately, the pursuit of inner peace is the foundation for creating a more peaceful and just world for all beings.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace, mindfulness, compassion, ethical conduct.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The golden lines of Indian culture, having the essence of universal brotherhood and world peace, deliberately, are being denied their due recognition in the mad race of materialism.¹ As with the invention of new technologies and advancements of ideas and thoughts in almost all spheres of life, human beings are confining themselves into a small chip, which we term "Global Village". People in a village live together nearby and share the problems, sorrow, and moments of joy. Despite having trivial differences, the mutual relationship in a nutshell remains cordial. The concept of global village has also brought the people residing in different parts of the globe closer through fast-growing means of transportation and communication. A person suffering from visibly incurable diseases may get the prescription of proper medicines from a medical expert residing in some other corner of the world in minutes through the internet; two or more persons can have a teleconference and exchange ideas through telephone, Facebook, Twitter, web camera and many other social networking sites and apps. However, this globalization still has to cover a long distance in developing humanity. A stronger nation does not feel any hesitation in threatening and terrorizing a weaker nation, and within no time invades the weaker one. Intrusion in the territorial jurisdiction of some other countries by unmanned drone airplanes may be taken as the negative consequence of globalization.

Terrorist activities conducted and executed by Al-Qaida, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hamas and various such outfits in the name of Jihad can easily be noticed.² Everybody is suffering from uncertain violence such as psychological impact arising from economic instability, social-originating from conflicts of ideologies and faiths, and political such as arms race, war, and terrorism. Scientific and technological advances have undoubtedly made our lives quite easier and pleasant, but the lust for more and being more powerful than others

¹ "Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu nirāmayāḥ / Sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantu, mā kaścid duḥkhabhāga bhavet //"

² It has resulted in creating a sense of fear psychosis among the common man. Today all individuals, communities, and nations are facing the terror and pain of violence.

has resulted in shattering the ethical and spiritual values. Man is killing man intentionally in the name of religion, region, country or community and thereby creating a sense of insecurity, hatred, and ill-will in society. Sometimes, it seems unbelievable, how a man, who himself claims to be a social creature of nature, can act like this. Although we all are aware of the consequences that violence always inflicts pain and sorrow, still we are becoming more and more violent day by day. History has witnessed innumerable instances of dictators including Aurangzeb, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, etc., who caused terror, inflicted sorrow and destruction on this only life-discovered planet. Despite these past sad experiences, we are once again on the same path that leads to hatred, ill-will, bloodshed, etc. This is the harsh reality and we have to accept this whether we like it or not.

Today we are living in the 21st century. The century is paving the way for advancement in science and technology. And in this modern era of globalization, the rapid progress of science and technology has brought a new dimension in human life in its comforts as well as in the way of its thinking. Day by day, man is growing towards a narrow and self-centered thinking. He has developed the mentality that he should get the maximum possible ease and comfort even if others are deprived of that. Thus, a sense of intolerance is growing rapidly. It is reflected in the unrest, tension, cold war, etc. in the present world as we have recently witnessed in the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine wars. The situation of nuclear war has developed and every nation is looking at its neighbor with suspicion. Not only the big powers or Western countries but also the Eastern countries are worried about this tense situation. Today, the principle of peace movement i.e., peaceful coexistence has become the need of the hour. It is very closely linked with the nations of the world, peace as the chief aim of international relations. And towards the international atmosphere for peaceful coexistence, steps were taken forward for the first time by the Buddha.

II. BUDDHIST NOTIONS FOR CULTIVATING INNER PEACE.....

Just after preaching the first five monks at Sarnath followed by the group of his fifty other friends,³ the Buddha admonished them to go forth into the world and work for the gain of many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good and the benefit of not only human beings but also for the welfare of gods and other heavenly beings.⁴

The Buddha, a non-believer in a permanent soul, thrust upon the notion that there is no master other than the moral law that governs the whole world. Further, he establishes that what one sows one reaps; what we are at present is the result of what we did previously, and what we shall be, is determined by

³ *Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma and Assajji.*

⁴ *Mahāvagga*, I, Prof. Mahesh Tiwary (ed.), Delhi University Publication, p. 23. "Caratha, Bhikkhave Carikan bahūjana hitaya bahujana sukhaya lokanukampaya atthaya hitaya sukhaya devamanussanan."

what we do at present.⁵ We know that pain is disliked by us, so it must be by other beings, as it is with us, so it must be with others. The Buddha has told that violence or injury is ignoble. He clarifies that a person indulged in such acts can not be a nobleman.⁶

Buddhism does not approve or support ethics of war and violence. In the Dhammapada, the Buddha says that victory generates enmity and a defeated person feels pain but only a person who has overcome passion for victory and defeat enjoys peace within and without.⁷

Āṅguttaranikāya makes this concept more specific. A violent person creates hell in the world, whereas a non-violent one creates heaven. A person who either himself indulges in violence or approves of violence is considered to be a sinner, an inhabitant of hell. On the contrary, a person who restrains himself from violent acts, discourages others from such acts, and does not approve them, creates heaven on this earth.

Buddhism, a spiritual tradition founded over 2,600 years ago by Siddhartha Gautama, has a profound emphasis on inner peace as a means to achieve a state of enlightenment. The teachings of Buddhism focus on the pursuit of wisdom, compassion, and mindfulness to alleviate suffering and attain a deeper understanding of the nature of existence. The journey from inner peace to world peace in Buddhism is rooted in the belief that personal transformation is interconnected with the well-being of society as a whole. This paper aims to explore how the principles of Buddhism can guide individuals towards inner peace, which in turn can lead to a more harmonious and peaceful world.

The journey from inner peace to world peace in Buddhism also involves the practice of ethical conduct and the cultivation of wisdom. By following the Eightfold Path, which includes principles such as right speech, right action, and right livelihood, individuals can lead a more ethical and virtuous life that promotes harmony and cooperation with others. Additionally, by developing wisdom through the study of Buddhist teachings and the contemplation of life's impermanence and interconnectedness, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the causes of suffering and the path to liberation.

One of the key teachings of Buddhism is the concept of impermanence, which emphasizes the transient nature of existence and the inevitability of change. By accepting impermanence and letting go of attachment to material possessions, status, and ego, individuals can cultivate a sense of inner peace that is not dependent on external circumstances. This sense of inner peace

⁵ *Milindapañhapāli*, Swami Dwarikadas Shastri (2006), Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati: "Bhasitan petan, Mahārāja, Bhagavata— Kammassaka, Manava, Satta, Kammadayada, Kammayoni, Kammabandhu, Kammapatisarana. Kamman satte vibhajjati yadidan hinappanitataya ti."

⁶ Dhṛp 270: "Na tena ariyo hoti, yena pāṇāni hiṃsati/ Ahimsā sabbapāṇānaṃ, ariyo'ti pavuccati //".

⁷ Dhṛp 201: "Jayam veram pasavati dukkham seti parājito/ Upasanto sukham seti, hitvā jayaparājayam //"

can help individuals navigate the ups and downs of life with equanimity and resilience, leading to a greater sense of inner stability and well-being.

The journey from inner peace to world peace in Buddhism also involves the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation. By letting go of anger, resentment, and grudges towards oneself and others, individuals can cultivate a sense of inner peace that is free from the burden of past grievances. By practicing forgiveness, individuals can heal emotional wounds, mend broken relationships, and promote reconciliation and harmony in their personal lives and society as a whole.

Buddhism teaches that inner peace is not a solitary pursuit, but rather a collective endeavor that requires the support and cooperation of others. By fostering a sense of community and interconnectedness with other practitioners, individuals can draw strength, inspiration, and guidance from each other on the path towards inner peace. Through the practice of generosity, service, and altruism, individuals can contribute to the well-being of others and promote a culture of kindness, empathy, and cooperation that fosters peace and harmony.

The journey from inner peace to world peace in Buddhism also involves the practice of mindfulness in everyday life. By bringing awareness and presence to each moment, individuals can cultivate a sense of inner peace that is not dependent on external circumstances or outcomes. By practicing mindfulness in daily activities such as eating, walking, and interacting with others, individuals can develop a sense of equanimity and clarity that can help them navigate the challenges and complexities of modern life with grace and resilience.

III. THE FOUNDATION OF PEACE IN BUDDHISM

At the core of Buddhist teachings lies the Four Noble Truths which acknowledge the existence of suffering, its origin, the possibility of liberation from suffering, and the path to achieving it. The path to liberation, known as the Noble Eightfold Path, includes right understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. Through acts of kindness, forgiveness, and empathy, individuals can cultivate a compassionate mindset and extend it to others, fostering peace in their immediate surroundings and beyond.

These principles serve as a roadmap for individuals to transcend suffering (*dukkha*) and cultivate inner tranquility. The Buddha has shown to mankind the path of removal of suffering. It is the Noble Eight-fold Path (*Ariyo-Aṭṭhaṅgiko Maggo* or *Majjhimā Paṭipadā*). It is acknowledged as an excellent course of spiritual training and has eight constituents or *aṅgas*. As mentioned in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*⁸, the path has the following elements: *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (Right View or Understanding), *Sammā Saṅkappo* (Right Resolution), *Sammā Vācā* (Right Speech), *Sammā Kammanto* (Right

⁸ Swāmī Dwārikādās Shāstrī (2009), *Dīghanikāyapāli*, vol., 2, Varanasi: Baudha Bharati, p. 540.

Action), *Sammā Ājīvo* (Right Livelihood), *Sammā Vāyāmo* (Right Effort/ Endeavour), *Sammā Sati* (Right Mindfulness), and *Sammā Samādhi* (Right Concentration).

This is the path between the two extremes, viz., excess worldly pleasure and the extreme self-mortification. Let us, now, have a thorough explanation of these eight constituents:

***Sammā Diṭṭhi* (Right view or understanding):** Right view is the knowledge of understanding the four Noble Truths in their true sense. It refers to understanding the things in their true nature or *yathābhūta*⁹. This is possible only when the mind is free from all obsessions and impurities or *āsavas*¹⁰ through ethical conduct and mental culture. The word *Diṭṭhi* in *Sammādiṭṭhi* stands for view, belief, dogma, theory, speculation, etc.¹¹ The prefix *Sammā* means proper, right, best, perfect, etc. Thus, *Sammādiṭṭhi* means proper understanding.

***Sammā Saṅkappo* (Right resolution):** Right resolution means the thought of renunciation, of detachment, of compassion and love, of non-harming and non-violence as mentioned in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*.¹²

***Sammā Vācā* (Right speech):** It is abstention from falsehood, backbiting, slander, harsh, impolite and malicious speech, idle talk and gossip. When a person abstains himself from all these negative activities, then the truth is naturally spoken as something profitable for the speaker and listener both. It is better to be silent than to engage in useless chatter.¹³

***Sammā Kammanto* (Right action):** It is refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. It aims at promoting the moral, honorable, and peaceful conduct of a person.¹⁴

***Sammā Ājīvo* (Right livelihood):** Right Livelihood consists of refraining from earning one's living in a manner which brings harm to others, for example,

⁹ T. W. Rhys Davids & Willaim Stede (2003), *Pali - English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers

Pvt. Ltd., p. 549: “*Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, dukkhe ñāṇaṃ, dukkhasamudaye ñāṇaṃ, dukkhanirodhe ñāṇaṃ, dukkhanirodhagāminiyaṃ paṭipadāya ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi.*”

¹⁰ T. W. Rhys Davids & Willaim Stede (2003), *Pali - English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 115.

¹¹ T. W. Rhys Davids & Willaim Stede (2003), *Pali - English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 695.

¹² *Dīghanikāyapāli*, op.cit., 540: “*Nekkhammasaṅkappo abyāpādasāṅkappo avihimsāsaṅkappo, ayavaṃ vuccati bhikkhave sammāsaṅkappo //*”.

¹³ Ven. W. Rahula (2005), *What the Buddha Taught*, Bangkok: Haw Trai Foundation Press, p. 47; “*Musāvādā veramaṇī, piṣuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī, samphap-palāpā veramaṇī, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave sammāvācā //*”

¹⁴ *Dīghanikāyapāli*, op. cit.: “*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesu mic-chācārā veramaṇī ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammākammanto //*”

trading in weapons, in living beings, in flesh and intoxicants, cheating in trade, selling poisonous articles, etc., as clearly stated by the Buddha¹⁵

Sammā Vāyāmo (Right effort/ endeavour): It is of four kinds: (a) preventing evil thoughts that have not yet arisen; (b) getting rid of such evil thoughts that have already arisen; (c) producing and cultivating good and wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen; (d) conserving and bringing to perfection good and wholesome thoughts that have already arisen. This, in Buddhism, is the right mental exercise.¹⁶

Sammā Sati (Right mindfulness): According to *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*, mindfulness has four types of ways as follows¹⁷.

Sati means becoming constantly aware and mindful of the activities of the body, sensations, mental states, and ideas or cognitive processes, thoughts, etc. By right mindfulness, man gains self-control and becomes self-possessed. It aims at self-mastery. It also stands for having a look at various incidents, and things around us; differentiate between merit and demerit, etc. In taking help of its two characteristics marks of *Apilāpāna lakkhaṇa* and *Upaggaṇḥana*, *sāti* proceeds further by reminding the mind what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, what is helpful and what is harmful and likewise. As mentioned in *Dhammapada*.¹⁸

Etymologically, the Pali term *Sati* (Skt.: *Smṛti*) means memory but it was given new connotations in early Buddhism and thus the rendering of *Sati* simply as memory is inadequate in most of the contexts. It has been explained in diverse ways and contexts in the Buddhist Canon. It seems that *Sati* has different functions on different occasions for different purposes. In the *Dukkhadhammasutta* of the *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*, the Buddha gives instructions on how to behave in daily life:

And how, monks, has a monk comprehended a code of conduct and way of living in such a way that as he conducts himself thus and as he lives thus, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and dejection do not flow into him? Suppose a man should enter a thorny forest. There would be thorns in front of him, thorns behind him, thorns to his left, thorns to his right, thorns below him, and thorns above him. He would go forward, being mindful (*sata*), he would go back, being mindful, thinking: 'May no thorn (prick) me!' So too, monks, whatever in the world has an agreeable and pleasing nature is called a thorn in

¹⁵ "Idha bhikkhave, anuppannāvako micchājīvānaṃ pahāti, sammā ājīvena, jivikaṃ kappeti, ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave sammā-ājīvo."

¹⁶ Ibid., 540 - 41: "Idha bhikkhave, bhikkhu anuppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ pajahati ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammāvāyāmo"

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 541: "Idha bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ vedanāsu pi citte pi dhammesu, dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke, abhijjhādomanassaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammāsati."

¹⁸ Dh 157: "Attānaṃ ce piyaṃ jaññā, rakkheyya naṃ surakkhitaṃ/ Tiṇṇaṃ aññataraṃ yāmaṃ, paṭijaggeyya paṇḍito".

the Noble One's Discipline.¹⁹

Furthermore, the Buddha says '*Ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā*' "Oh! Monks this is the only way for purification of being".²⁰ There is no meditation, no way of purification without four foundations of mindfulness (*sati*).

This implies that one should constantly practice mindfulness in every moment of life to be away from the unwholesome state of mind, which results from contact with attractive objects.

Sammā Samādhi (Right concentration): It is the practice of the four *dhyānas* (Pāli: *Jhana*) or meditative absorption. In the first *dhyāna*, there arises detachment from sensual objects and unwholesome states of mind. It is accompanied by initial application of mind or *vitakka*²¹ and sustained thought or *vicāra*²², rapture or *pīti*²³ and joy or *sukha* born of detachment (*upekkhā*).

In the second *dhyāna*, all diverse mental activities are suppressed, inner tranquility and one-pointedness (*ekaggata*) of mind are developed and rapture and joy continue. In the third *dhyāna*, the feeling of joy disappears but rapture continues. In the fourth *dhyāna*, all sensations of happiness and unhappiness, joy and sorrow are no more, only pure equanimity or *upekkha* and awareness or *sati* remain. It should be noted that *ekaggata* is a common factor in all the *dhyānas*. *Ekaggata* is the essence of a *dhyāna*.

The Noble Eightfold Path is thus a practical way shown by the Buddha for a tensionless, tranquil, and peaceful life. It is a self-discipline of body, speech, and mind. It is the path of purification. The essence of path has been put forth in the following verse by the Buddha: "*Sabbapāpassa akarāṇaṃ kusalaṃ upasampadā/ Sacitta pariyodapanam, etaṃ Buddhana sāsaṇaṃ //*"²⁴.

In the flow of this noble eightfold path, the Buddha further prescribes a path of gradual purification as He thinks that unless one attains complete purification, they won't be able to cultivate the seeds of inner peace and thereby move to the sojourn of others' (world) peace. This path has three steps, namely: *Sīla* (virtue), *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Paññā* (wisdom).

Sīla helps in curtailing the physical and vocal misdeeds. *Samādhi* minimizes the pollution of mind. *Paññā* removes the darkness of ignorance and unfolds the nature of reality.

In words of Prof. Mahesh Tiwary, "the man having such soothing light of wisdom, finally destroys the chain of attachment and achieves a state of desire-

¹⁹ Tse-fu Kuan (2008), *Mindfulness in Early Buddhism*, New York: Routledge, p. 42.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 543.

²¹ *Pali-English Dictionary*, op. cit., 620: "*Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivicca, vā catutthajjhānaṃ upasampajja, viharati ayaṃ, vuccati bhikkhave sammāsamādhi.*"

²² *Ibid.*, 615.

²³ *Ibid.*, 462.

²⁴ *Dhammapada*, op. cit., verse no. 183.

lessness. It is named as *Nibbāna*.²⁵

Sīla (skt.: Śīla) originally means “habit, nature, character, behavior.”²⁶ It has been analyzed in various contexts and from various standpoints. However, here it is taken in a sense of purifying physical and vocal misdeeds and also a means of preparing a solid background for building a strong structure of character.

Sīla is the very basic of *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Vipassanā* (insight wisdom). It is not only the control of the body and speech to restrain from doing and speaking of sinful, but it is also the control of violence in the society as well. As it is said in *Visuddhimagga*: “When a wise man establishes well in virtue, develops consciousness and understanding then as a bhikkhu ardent sagacious, he succeeds in disentangling this tangle.”²⁷ *Sīla* is so-called because it keeps one from bodily and verbal evils.²⁸ It is not just morality or moral conduct but also the condition of peace.

Generally, there are two types of *Sīla* which have been mentioned in *Brahmajālasutta*, the very first discourse of *Dīghnaikāya* and also in *Visuddhimagga*.

Sīla for monks: *Sīla* for monks means the monastic discipline or rules which have to be followed by monks who renounce worldly life to devote themselves in the monastery, temples, as well as in forests. There are 227 rules commonly known as *Bhikkhu pātimokkha*, the fundamental precepts for monks. The four major precepts are described as: *Pātimokkhasaṃvarasīla*: It stands for self-control to restrain from fracturing the disciplines laid down by the Buddha. *Ājīvapārisuddhisīla*: It is the self-control to restrain from doing wrong way for getting a living. *Indriyasaṃvarasīla*: It is the self-control to restrain the senses which arises due to the coming of the six sense organs into contact with their respective objects. *Paccayasannissitasīla*: It is the self-control to regulatory contemplations, whenever monks have to use the four necessities of monks’ daily life.²⁹ These four are: *cīvara*, *piṇḍapāta*, *senāsana* and *gilānapaccayabhesajja*.

Sīla for laymen: The following *Sīlas* are technically called the *Pañca-Sīla* or Five precepts needed to be observed by all Buddhist devotees who do not have much time in everyday life owing to their preoccupation in their family life. The *Pañca Sīlas* are: *Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī* (to restrain from killing); *Adinnādānā veramaṇī* (to restrain from stealing); *Kāmesumicchācāra veramaṇī* (to restrain from sexual misconduct); *Musāvādā veramaṇī* (to restrain from lying), and *Surāmerayamajjappamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī* (to restrain from taking intoxicants).

²⁵ Baidyanath Labh (1991), *Paññā in Early Buddhism*, Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, p. iii.

²⁶ *Pāli - English Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 712.

²⁷ “*Sīle patitṭhāya naro sapaṇṇo, cittaṃ paññaṇca bhāvayaṃ / Ātāpī nipako bhikkhu, so imaṃ vijaṭṭhaya jaṭanti //*” Swāmī Dwārikādās Shāstrī (2000), *Samyuttanikāyapāli*, Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, p. 25.

²⁸ S. Rinpoche (ed.), *Ten Suttas From Dīghanikāya*, p. 448.

²⁹ The four necessities for monks are *Cīvara* (cloth), *Piṇḍapāta* (alms), *Senāsana* (dwelling-place) and *Gilānapaccayabhesajja* (medicine), Ibid, p. 449.

It is pertinent to mention here that in Buddhist tradition, *Pañcasīla* refers to the fundamental moral principles for lay disciples of the Buddha. Before developing the higher training, an individual has to pass through these precepts, because they are the basic foundations for creating a moral character in the social as well as ethical life of a person. If one observes these five principles in his life, he can maintain harmonious relations and trust with others. However, according to Prof. Labh, so far as lay disciples are concerned, they have to lead a social life with many ups and downs and have to pass through many difficult situations in the day-to-day life, so the Buddha has taken a comparatively lenient attitude towards them.³⁰

So far as the first precept - *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī* is concerned, a person should abstain from killing, causing to kill, or sanctioning the destruction of a living being. It is to be kept in mind that the living being does not merely stand for humans but it covers all animals as well as vegetation. In its strictest sense, anything that has life comes under this category. Through this precept, the Buddha has tried to make a person realize that he has to understand that all living beings are like him, and as he gets disturbed by pain, similarly when injury is done to any type of living being, they too experience the same unpleasant feeling. The concept is more clearly mentioned in the *Dhammapada* as.³¹

However, it seems proper to analyze here that as many a time unknowingly or unintentionally under some unavoidable circumstances particularly while performing various daily routine activities such as walking, harvesting, cooking, etc., killing or hurting becomes inevitable as many small insects are killed, so does such acts be considered as the violation of the first precept. The Buddha there establishes some norms to examine and identify the real cause behind all such acts as he clearly emphasizes on avoiding killing intentionally. Therefore, in daily routines, one is advised to restrain not only from killing but even from all sorts of physical hurt like beating, wounding, etc.

The second precept i.e., *adinnādānā veramaṇī*, teaches restraint from acts like stealing, robbing, snatching, pick pocketing, etc. In other words, to abstain from taking things which are not given or illegally taken without the wish of the owner. According to S. Tachibana, the *adinnādāna* includes material as well as immaterial things such as infringement of another's rights, unasked interference in another's business, waste of time by an employee, neglect of duty or evasion of responsibility.³²

The third precept i.e., *kāmesumicchācāra veramaṇī*, is the abstinence from committing unsocial and unlawful sexual intercourse. Here the word *kāma* stands for lustful attachment to male or female and *micchācāra* means wrong

³⁰ B. Labh (1993), *Buddhist Pañcasīla vs Political Panchasheel*, vol. 9, J&K: Jammu Panorama, p. 45.

³¹ Dhṛp 129-130: "Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa, sabbe bhāyanti maccuno/ Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā, na haneyya na ghātaye// "Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa, sabbesaṃ jīvitam piyaṃ/ Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā, na haneyya na ghātaye//"

³² S. Tachibana, *The Ethics of Buddhism*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1986, p. 58.

conduct. Thus, the two words together indicate volition of fulfillment of lustful desire of a male for a female and vice-versa. No doubt, sex is an essential and natural biological need from which no one can deny, but, should it be expressed and performed openly? Should it be like in animal manner or should there be some norms, modesty, etc. to regulate it? As in the *Suttanipāta*, the Buddha says: "Let the wise man avoid an unchaste life as a burning heap of coals; not being able to live a life of chastity, let him not transgress with another man's wife."³³

The fourth precept i.e., *musāvādā veramaṇī* teaches to abstain from telling lies. Although, in practical life, it is very difficult to speak truth only all the time, it may be said that maximum and best efforts be made to be true in one's speech and behavior. Besides, one should try one's level best to utter sweet, polite, meaningful and sensible words.

The fifth and last precept of the *Pañcasīla* is *surāmerayamajjappamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī* which teaches to abstain from any state of indolence arising from the use of intoxicants. Wine or any other variety of liquor, or so to say, any type of intoxicants is harmful to both the body and mind. It is indeed a silent killer which causes serious afflictions. A habitual drinker causes harm to his own body and mind and harms his family as well, by way of losing both wealth and health. He loses mental equilibrium and cannot take a balanced and cool decision. This is the reason intoxication is prohibited in Buddhism.

There are some more *Silas* like *Brahmacariya-sīla*, *Aṭṭhaṅgika-sīla*, and *Navaṅga-sīla* for laymen to keep vows similar to those mentioned in *Pañca-sīla*. In the last three *Silas* one has to take eight and nine vows on different occasions. On the other hand, the eight vows in *Aṭṭhaṅgika-sīla* are called *Aṭṭhaṅgika-uposathasīla*. "The *Dasa-silas* come under the rules of novice as *Sāmaṇera*".³⁴ However, the most fundamental is the *Pañca-sīla*, which regulates the social life of humans. Whenever *Sīla* is brought into practice by man, no harm is done to anybody. For the sake of peaceful life, the Buddha has laid down these rules.

Besides *Sīla*, *Samādhi* (Concentration) has a very important role in Buddhism. *Buddhaghosācariya* uses the term *Citta* and *Samādhi* synonymously. *Samādhi* is the profitable unification of mind (*Cittassaekaggatā*).³⁵ It means that the mind is put to focusing on a single object. It stresses itself on only one object to stand still. The real nature of mind is always flirting. Whenever mind is controlled and fixed at one point, it will become very powerful, useful, and peaceful. If one can cultivate one's mind in proper ways, it will stand still, steadfast without fluctuation and flirting. Concentration can also be defined as the unification of wholesome mental states (*Kusalacittakaggatā Samādhi*).

³³ "Abrahācariyaṃ parivijjeyya, agnārakāsu jalitaṃ va viññū / Asambhuṇanto pana brahācariyaṃ, parassa dāraṃ na atikkameyya // " F. Max Mullar (2006), *The Sacred Book of the East (Suttanipāta)*, verse no. 395, Delhi: Low Price Publications; O. P. Pathak (2004), *Dhammapadapālī and Suttanipāta*, Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakshan.

³⁴ U. Dhammaratana, *Guide Through Visuddhimagga*, p.1.

³⁵ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa (1956), *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, p. 84

According to Phramaha Narāsabho “The depth meaning of *Samādhi* and the significance of it seems to be awarded for which the real equivalent in English is not possible. It has been rendered by terms as ‘concentration’, ‘meditation’, ‘contemplation’, and so forth but inadequately”. Further, *Samādhi* in *Abhidhamma*, has been defined synonymously with ‘*Cittassa ekaggatā*’ (one-pointedness of mind) - “*Yā cittassa ñhite, saññhiti, avañhiti avisāhāro, avikkhepo, avisāhata-mānasatā, samatho, samādhindriyaṃ, samādhi-balaṃ, sammāsamādhi.*”³⁶

Nāgasena, in *Milindapañha* explains *Samādhi* as the leader. He says: “*Samādhi, ye kechi kusalā Dhammā, sabbe te samādhippamukhā hoti, samādhinitṭṭa, samādhipoṇā samādhipabbhārā’ ti*”³⁷

Samādhi itself is based on the morality for its development. And *Samādhi* takes the origin of moral conduct, then it is regarded as the basis of insight knowledge (*Vipassanā* or *Paññā*).

In this way, we find that both *Sīla* and *Samādhi* prepare the mind for developing and understanding *Paññā* (wisdom). The motive of wisdom in this context is to make mind free from the three immoral latent factors (*anusayas*), namely, *rāgānusaya*, *paṭighānusaya*, and *mānānusaya*.

Fruits of developing wisdom have also been explained in the *Dhammapada* in the following manner: “A person endowed with wisdom understands the threefold reality of phenomena and thereby gets free from all the attachments towards them.” With the attainment of wisdom, a wise man drives away the clouds of sloth by heedfulness, and thereby becoming sorrowless, he looks down upon all the miserable beings as a man on hilltop looks down upon beings on plains.³⁸

Also, *Suttanipāta* explains wisdom in various ways and as performing various types of functions, it also makes one a true and great human being. First, the Buddha has called wisdom as his plough,³⁹ as the plough discharges the function of ploughing a field, so does wisdom discharge the function of ploughing the mind and prepare it for growing moral *dhammas*. It has also been considered as one of the most essential qualifications for a sage. A sage endowed with wisdom along with *Sīla* and *Samādhi* destroys all types of cankers and gets free from all sorts of worldly ties.⁴⁰

Similarly, wisdom is seen making one wise man also. Such a person, by defeating all the internal and external objects of attachment, goes beyond

³⁶ *Vibhaṅga* (1904), C.A.F. Rhys Davids (ed.), London: Pali Text Society, p. 217.

³⁷ *Milindapañha* (1998), Igatpuri: Vipassana Research Institute, p. 36.

³⁸ *Dhp* 28: “*Pamādaṃ appamāde yathā nudati paññito / Paññāpāsādamāruhya asoko sokiniṃ pajaṃ / Pabbataṭṭho va bhūmaṭṭhe dhīro bāle avekkhati //*”

³⁹ “..*Pañña me yuganaṅgalam ...* quoted by B. Labh in *Paññā in Early Buddhism*, op. cit, p. 50.

⁴⁰ “*Paññābalaṃ sīlavatupapannaṃ, samāhitaṃ jhānarataṃ satimaṃ / Saṅgā pamuttaṃ akhilaṃ anāsavaṃ, taṃ vā’pi dhīrā munim vedayanti //*” *Suttanipāta* quoted by B. Labh in *Paññā in Early Buddhism*, op.cit.

moral and immoral and remains unaffected by the temptations.⁴¹ Further, wisdom makes one a true *Brāhmaṇa* also. One who is intelligent knows well the right and wrong paths, one who has attained truth and wisdom, is called a true *Brāhmaṇa*.⁴²

Furthermore, Buddhism lays stress on the cultivation of *Mettā* (universal friendliness), *Karuṇā* (universal compassion), *Muditā* (joy) and *Upekkhā* (equanimity), the constituents or principles of *Brahmavihāra*. According to Buddhism, *Brahmavihāra* is a noble or sublime way of living as the literal meaning of the word *Brahma* is superior or noble⁴³ and *vihāra* means living⁴⁴. When these four sublime human values are inculcated and developed, there is an emergence of a social setup where there is no enmity, cruelty, jealousy, hatred, inequality, etc.

Nārada Mahāthera also termed these four sublime virtues as *Appamaññā* (illimitable) as those that do not find any limit and are extended towards all beings without exception. They embrace all living beings including animals.⁴⁵

According to Nārada, the *modus operandi* of *Brahmavihāra* is: “*Mettā* embraces all beings, *Karuṇā* embraces sufferers, *Muditā* embraces the prosperous, and *Upekkhā* embraces the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant.”⁴⁶ Also, in words of Prof. Baidyanat Labh, like the monastic Order, the Buddha gave more importance to social Order, which should be congenial and saturated with peace and tranquility. For this, He (the Buddha) introduced the idea of *Brahmavihāra*. Now, let us examine these four principles in detail:

***Mettā*:** Literal meaning of *Mettā* is friendliness.⁴⁷ The equivalent Sanskrit term for *Mettā* is *Maitrī*. There is no equivalent term for *Mettā* in English and hence it can be taken to refer to good-will, benevolence, loving-kindness, etc. In its technical sense, it refers to the universal friendliness. It is “*Parahitakāmatā*” or the pious desire for the well-being of all. It embraces the entire living beings and radiates in the form of their well-being. While practicing friendliness, one establishes the noble idea and develops within oneself a thinking that he and the persons all around him should be in a state of happiness. Further, he breaks this barrier and develops it to persuade all through.

⁴¹ “*Tadubhayāni vijeyya paṇḍarāni, ajjhataṃ bahiddhā ca suddhipañño/ Kaṇhaṃ sukkaṃ upātivato, paṇḍito tādī pavuccate tathattā //*” *Suttanipāta* quoted by B. Labh in *Paññā in Early Buddhism*, op. cit., p. 50.

⁴² “*Gambhīrapaññaṃ medhāviṇ, maggāmagassa kovidaṃ / Uttamatthaṃ anuppattaṃ, tamaḥ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*” // *Suttanipāta* quoted by B. Labh in *Paññā in Early Buddhism*, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴³ *Pali-English Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 492.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 642.

⁴⁵ Nārada Mahāthera, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, p. 614.

⁴⁶ Nārada Thera, *The Way to Nibbanā*, pp. 23 - 24.

⁴⁷ *Pali - English Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 540.

There is no living creature on this earth, another world or in the divine kingdom who is not in the purview of this universal friendliness. The practitioner makes efforts in all directions. The waves of friendliness touching and creating smoothness can be felt in this very life. The practitioner thinks that the beings who are born, who will be born, who are either big or small, living near or far, living diagonally in space or vacuum or living anywhere may be in the form of stable moving, etc. may be happy. Let all beings be free from ailment pollution and disturbance in the journey of their life - “*Sabbe sattā arogā anighā hontu, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā. Sabbe sattā sukhino hontu.*”

Furthermore, according to Piyadassi Thera,⁴⁸ “*Mettā is a very pure sublime state of human mind; like a quicksilver it cannot attach itself to anything. It is a calm, non-assertive super-solvent among virtues.*”

In border sense, it may be concluded that it is the ultimate love that does not have any boundaries and is above the sense of taking anything in return. In this way, friendliness covers ‘*sabbe sattā*’ or all beings living anywhere and thus it is called unlimited.

Karuṇā: It means compassion.⁴⁹ It is not a mere verbal sympathy but it is the feeling of a sublime state of experiencing the suffering of others, making one with that, and thereafter making an attempt for removal of the suffering. In this direction, it is defined— ‘*kaṇṇ itī dukkhaṇ, uṇāti itī pavissati, taṇ vināsāya vāyamati ca.*’ *Kaṇ-* suffering, *uṇāti-* entering into suffering of others and making right efforts for the removal of the same. A man practicing compassion does not simply harbor the idea at an intellectual level but rather puts the same into practice. By doing so, he does not develop sympathy, compassion for them. He makes the idea engrained in him and develops it in such a way that he persuades all through and embraces the beings of the universe. Keeping this in view it is said that ‘*Karuṇā sahaḡatena cittena sakalaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati.*’

Karuṇā, therefore, does not mean helping others and expecting something in return. Rather, it is helping without the zero expectation of any desire. It is the kind of pure mind wherein no selfishness or ulterior motive inside resides. According to Nārada Mahāthera,⁵⁰ the chief characteristic of compassion is the wish to remove the suffering of others. As in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, it is observed that the *Bodhisatta* will help others to get rid of their sufferings in the world before getting himself out of suffering.

Muditā: Third sublime state means joy, glad, pleased, etc.⁵¹ It is joy in a generic and technical sense. It is the joy concerning the well-being of others.⁵² *Muditā* is, thus, the state of happiness at the sight of welfare of others without

48 Piyadassi Thera (1979), *The Buddha Ancient Path*, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, p. 114.

⁴⁹ *Pali - English Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 197.

⁵⁰ *The Buddha and His Teachings*, op. cit., p. 536.

⁵¹ *Pali - English Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 537.

⁵² *Muditā sahaḡatena cetasaṃ ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati*; M., Syamaratṭhassa Tepikaṃ, XIII, p. 50.

jealousy. The men who are healthy, educated, well-settled, and making progress in their day-to-day activities are regarded as happy persons. People generally develop jealousy towards others' progress. They also sometimes find people in a state of distress, like to increase the distress by creating unfavorable situations for them. Thus, *Muditā* minimizes such wrong feelings and in due course removes them forever. There is no sense of jealousy at all for everyone, but there is unmixed joy for the gradual development of others. It is said that the practitioner develops the sublime state in such a way to persuade all through that he includes the beings of the entire universe.

Upekkhā: It is generally translated as indifference.⁵³ It is indifference in the sense that in the course of our life, we find persons who are ignorant people and due to their ignorance do something which is not up to the mark, sometimes even disturbing society. They do so out of ignorance. Here, the practitioner becomes indifferent and makes efforts for removal of the folly. It is also interpreted as equanimity and in that sense, all the beings of the universe are accepted as one and similar. There is no question of higher, lower, well to do, and poor persons. The practitioner takes them as beings, equal in their nature, in spirit, and does not develop any sense of discrimination. He develops this noble state also in a way to pursue all through and makes the entire direction surcharge with the noble idea - '*Upekkhā sahagatena cittaṇa sakalaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati.*'

The Buddha was a pragmatic thinker. He clearly stated that one has nothing to do with learning the four states of *Brahmavihāro* from a teacher living far away in a monastery or forest. Rather, the same can be learnt from the mother. For instance, a mother has three children. One has been sick and ailing for a long time. The other is healthy, well-educated and making progress every day. Third is a small baby having no understanding of anything. Now, what is the attitude of the mother towards these three children? The common feeling of the mother towards all is friendliness. She likes to see the well-being of all three. Concerning the ailing child, she wishes that the ailment should go away. Compassion becomes one with the feeling of the boy and tries to minimize suffering by making all possible efforts. The small baby, unsteadily roaming here and there, sometimes jumps on the body of the mother, making her clothes dirty. Mother is not hassled. Instead, she develops the feeling of indifference towards the foolish act of the baby, with a feeling of his becoming intelligent in the future.

Again, mother has a state of complete joy towards the healthy boy, settled, and progressing every moment. She does not feel jealous of his progress. As a stream of all the four sublime states is seen flowing incessantly in the heart of a mother. Similarly, one should learn it from her and develop practice in different walks of life.

It is further said that one should not think that in a particular moment or place, he will develop the feeling of friendliness, compassion, joy, and

⁵³ Pali - English Dictionary, op. cit., p. 150.

indifference, but whether while sitting, standing, lying down, or moving every time, there should be practice of sublime state of *Brahmavihāra*. It is said in this context that by inculcation and development of these sublime states there will be a society of harmony free from disturbances, the reign of friendliness, and eternal bliss.

Buddhism teaches that inner peace is not a passive state of being, but rather an active process of self-discovery and self-improvement. By practicing the principles of compassion, loving-kindness, and nonviolence, individuals can cultivate a sense of interconnectedness with all living beings, leading to a greater sense of empathy and understanding. This shift in perspective from self-centeredness to other-centeredness can transform relationships, communities, and ultimately society as a whole.

However, one essential point required to be made clear here is that sometimes violence may become a necessity in extreme cases. Under those circumstances, the Buddha does not teach that evil-doers should not be punished. He says that when evil is spoken of us, or when we are subjected to cruel and unjust treatment (*e.g. a group of robbers looting passengers in a train or a person indulged in outraging chastity of some women*) we should not simply remain silent resenting it, or be offended in mind, thinking that hatred is not pacified by hatred in return but by non-hatred and friendliness, as preached by the Buddha: “*Na hi verena varani sammantidha kudacanan/ Averena ca sammanti esa dhammao sanantano/*”⁵⁴

On the contrary, without malice towards those evil-doers, with no resentment, they should be caused to be punished.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the journey from inner peace to world peace in Buddhism is a transformative process that involves cultivating mindfulness, compassion, ethical conduct, wisdom, forgiveness, and community. By developing a deeper understanding of oneself and the world around them, individuals can cultivate a sense of inner peace that is interconnected with the well-being of society as a whole. By practicing the teachings of Buddhism in everyday life, individuals can contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious world. This quintessence is encapsulated in the famous words of the Buddha - Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal law. Happiness never decreases by being shared; this is the eternal truth.

⁵⁴ *Dhp* 5.

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BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT, PEACE, AND INNER TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract:

This paper explores the Buddhist perspective on conflict resolution, peace, and inner transformation, emphasizing the relevance of Gautama Buddha's teachings in contemporary global crises. Buddhism views conflict as both an external and internal struggle, rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion. By addressing these causes, individuals can cultivate inner peace, which serves as the foundation for societal harmony. The study examines key Buddhist texts, such as the *Sakkapariha Sutta* and the *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta*, which highlight the dangers of war and violence. The principle of Dependent Origination (*paṭicca samuppāda*) is applied to analyze the interconnected causes of conflict, including social inequalities and psychological tendencies.

Buddhism advocates for non-violence, ethical conduct, and wisdom as essential tools for peacebuilding. The study also discusses the role of moral education in shaping a more compassionate society. By integrating personal transformation with structural reforms, Buddhism offers a holistic approach to resolving conflicts. The research concludes that fostering inner peace and mindfulness can lead to a ripple effect, promoting global harmony and sustainable development. In a world marked by political instability and war, the teachings of the Buddha provide a timeless framework for cultivating peace at both individual and collective levels.

Keywords: *Buddhism, conflict resolution, inner peace, world peace, non-violence, mindfulness, compassion, dependent origination, ethical conduct, social harmony.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The critical lesson humanity should have taken from events like the Russia-Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, the Israel-Gaza conflict of 2023, and the horrific bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, is

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the importance of working tirelessly for lasting peace to ensure the safety of humanity. However, it appears this lesson has not been fully grasped. Conflicts and wars continue to erupt across the globe, often leading to catastrophic consequences. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world remains plagued by violence, unrest, and ongoing tensions. Such conflicts force countless innocent people to flee their homes, endure the loss of loved ones, and suffer immense hardship, leaving a trail of sorrow and devastation.

Is all the suffering and destruction caused by war truly necessary? This is a crucial question to reflect upon. While some argue that conflict is needed to bring about societal change, the real concern now is whether humanity can survive if such destructive paths continue. It has become a matter of life and death. In the event of another global war, there would be no winners, only widespread suffering. This makes it essential to understand the root causes of war and find effective ways to establish lasting peace and harmony in society. This paper explores how the philosophy of Gautama the Buddha can contribute to achieving this goal.

Buddhist philosophy defines its primary objective in various ways. Some describe it as the end of suffering and the elimination of harmful emotions such as greed, hatred, and ignorance, ultimately leading to enlightenment. Another perspective frames it as the attainment of peace. While peace and conflict are often viewed as societal issues, Buddhism identifies them as originating from troubled minds. Rather than treating wars as purely external problems, Buddhism regards them as symptoms of deeper, internal conflicts. Even during Gautama the Buddha's time, when weapons were far less advanced, they recognized the devastating effects of violence. In today's world, with weapons of mass destruction like nuclear bombs, a large-scale war could render the Earth uninhabitable for humans, animals, and plants alike. This highlights the urgency of understanding the causes of war and working tirelessly to prevent them, ensuring a peaceful and harmonious society.

Buddhism also explores small-scale conflicts within groups to understand the dynamics of war.¹ These smaller disputes often mirror the same fundamental issues underlying larger wars. Although some may consider Gautama Buddha's teachings outdated in today's rapidly changing world, the core problems they address remain unchanged. The wisdom of transformative figures like the Buddha, whose teachings have influenced civilizations for centuries, remains profoundly relevant. In a world plagued by violence and unrest, his timeless guidance offers valuable insights.

Buddhism addresses conflict as an integral part of its broader mission to alleviate suffering. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to achieve peace and happiness, primarily defined as inner peace, a state that an individual

¹ The study of smaller conflicts can help unravel broader patterns of human behavior that lead to larger wars, emphasizing that the seeds of large-scale violence often lie in minor disputes. Gautama the Buddha's emphasis on inner peace, ethical conduct, and harmonious living provides a framework for resolving both personal and societal conflicts.

can cultivate within themselves.² By adhering to the Buddha's teachings, individuals can attain this peaceful state, maintaining calm and composure even amidst external chaos. Buddhism emphasizes the possibility of personal transformation, enabling individuals to live peacefully even in a world filled with hatred and harm. For example, Buddhist teachings advocate living joyfully without harboring hatred toward others.

The Buddha's life is often likened to a lotus flower that remains untainted by the muddy water in which it grows, symbolizing the ideal way for Buddhists to live. Although achieving such peace is challenging, Buddhism asserts that it is attainable. Gautama Buddha regarded this inner transformation as the essence of his teachings: guiding individuals to avoid conflicts and live in harmony with others.

The Buddha's teachings focus on how individuals can live peacefully without falling into conflicts with others, rather than directly addressing how to make society peaceful as a whole. Some people might misunderstand this as advocating avoidance of problems and responsibilities, suggesting that Buddhism encourages individuals to retreat from society and focus only on their peace, like a hermit. Others might see Buddhism as pessimistic, implying that wars and conflicts are inevitable parts of life and cannot be eradicated, leaving inner peace as the only way to cope with suffering and escape the cycle of life and death. While it's true that Buddhism emphasizes freeing individuals from suffering, this is just one part of its broader philosophy.

If Buddhism were solely concerned with personal peace, it might seem indifferent to societal change, focusing only on individual enlightenment without addressing broader social issues. This could make it appear as though Buddhism accepts conflict as an unchangeable reality. However, this interpretation oversimplifies Buddhist teachings. While achieving enlightenment is challenging, Buddhism does not disregard the idea of improving society. Instead, it believes that fostering wisdom, understanding, and ethical behavior can reduce conflicts and make a meaningful difference. Although creating a society entirely free of conflict may be difficult, Buddhism seeks to educate people on the root causes of disputes and promote thoughtful ways to address them.

Gautama the Buddha's teachings address conflicts at various levels, ranging from personal arguments to large-scale disputes. These conflicts can occur between nations, where disagreements between leaders lead to wars,

² Inner peace is central to Buddhist philosophy, viewed as the foundation for achieving happiness and resolving conflicts at both personal and societal levels. The lotus flower, growing pure and beautiful despite its muddy environment, serves as a metaphor for spiritual growth and resilience in adverse conditions.

Buddha's teachings emphasize non-violence (*ahimsā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) as essential virtues for harmonious living. Buddhism underscores that lasting peace begins with self-transformation, urging individuals to cultivate mindfulness and ethical conduct.

or between groups within a country, such as religious or ethnic divisions. They can also arise within families, like disagreements between parents and children or among siblings. According to the *Sakkapariha Sutta*, conflict is a universal phenomenon affecting all living beings, whether they are humans, gods, spirits, or other forms of life.³ Even though all beings desire harmony, they often live with hatred, violence, and enmity, struggling to achieve the peace they long for. Buddhism acknowledges these realities while striving to cultivate understanding and compassion as tools to minimize conflicts and promote harmony at both individual and societal levels.⁴

In the *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta*, the Buddha describes how conflicts escalate into wars, leading to widespread death and destruction.⁵ He paints a vivid picture of battle, with both sides preparing weapons like swords, shields, bows, and arrows, and engaging in violent combat. Those who are wounded or killed experience immense suffering. This highlights Buddhism's recognition of the prevalence and devastating impact of war and violence, as recorded in early Buddhist teachings.

Buddhism views conflict as inherently harmful, categorizing it as a form of evil. Beyond the immediate suffering it causes, conflict leads to behaviors that contradict core Buddhist principles, such as non-violence, compassion, and truthfulness. Conflict often involves lying, spreading falsehoods, and using hurtful speech, fostering negative qualities that Buddhism sees as destructive.

Unlike ideologies that view conflict as a catalyst for social change, Buddhism rejects the notion that violence can lead to a better society.⁶ Instead, it considers conflict to be dehumanizing and counterproductive. According to

³ The *Sakkapariha Sutta* is part of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Long Discourses of the Buddha), *Sutta* 21, which is also known as the *Sakkapañha Sutta* (The Questions of Sakka). It records a conversation between the Buddha and Sakka, the king of the gods, focusing on the causes of conflict and the path to harmony.

⁴ Conflict, as addressed in Gautama Buddha's teachings, is a universal phenomenon impacting all beings, from individuals to nations. While the *Sakkapariha Sutta* highlights the prevalence of discord even among gods and spirits, the essence of Buddhist philosophy lies in recognizing these struggles and offering a path to harmony through understanding and compassion. By addressing the roots of hatred and enmity, Buddhism aims to foster peace at personal and societal levels.

⁵ The *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta*, found in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (Middle-Length Discourses, *Sutta* 13), vividly portrays the escalation of conflicts into wars. The Buddha describes scenes of violent combat, with opposing sides wielding swords, shields, bows, and arrows, resulting in widespread death, suffering, and destruction. This account underscores the Buddha's recognition of the devastating consequences of war and violence, as well as the importance of understanding and addressing their root causes to cultivate peace.

⁶ Buddhism fundamentally rejects the idea that violence can create lasting positive change. It emphasizes non-violence (*ahimsā*) as a moral and practical necessity. Violent actions are seen as perpetuating a cycle of suffering (*dukkha*), reinforcing hatred and further divisions within society.

Buddhist teachings, violent solutions to social problems perpetuate a cycle of violence, increasing the likelihood of future conflicts. Buddhism advocates for peaceful approaches, emphasizing that non-violent methods are more effective, particularly in today's world, where advanced technology has magnified the destructive consequences of war.

To foster peace in society, it is crucial to understand the Buddha's analysis of the root causes of war and conflict. Drawing on the principle of Dependent Origination (*paṭicca samuppāda*), the Buddha explains conflicts without resorting to abstract metaphysical concepts.⁷ This principle instead examines the conditions that give rise to events, offering a practical framework for understanding conflict.

When applied to social conflict, the Buddha identifies two primary sets of causes. The first are external factors, such as unjust social and economic systems, which create tensions and fuel disputes among groups. The second are internal factors, including moral failings and psychological issues within individuals, which also contribute significantly to conflicts.

To achieve lasting peace, both external and internal causes must be addressed. This involves reforming unfair social and economic structures while simultaneously fostering moral and psychological growth in individuals. By tackling both dimensions, Buddhism believes that society can move toward genuine and sustainable peace.

The two types of causes, external social conditions and internal moral failings, are deeply interconnected and influence one another. When a society lacks moral integrity, it fosters unhealthy psychological traits that guide people's actions. In turn, these negative actions contribute to corrupt social, political, and economic systems, creating a vicious cycle. Corrupt institutions produce morally compromised individuals, who then perpetuate and worsen the corruption within societal structures, leading to a continuous decline in the state of society.

In the *Kutadanta Sutta* and the *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta*, the Buddha emphasizes the role of external factors in social conflict, particularly economic inequality and deprivation. These texts suggest that peace is at risk in a society where basic necessities and equal opportunities are denied to certain groups. Poverty can push people toward criminal behavior, rebellion, and even armed

⁷ This principle explains that all phenomena arise due to specific conditions. It offers a cause-and-effect analysis of events, including conflicts, without invoking supernatural or metaphysical explanations. For instance, conflict arises not independently but due to interconnected causes like greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*). It's say in external causes that social injustice, economic inequality, and political oppression create systemic tensions, often manifesting as group disputes or wars. And in internal causes are greed, anger, and delusion within individuals lead to interpersonal and societal conflicts. Personal moral failings, such as selfishness or intolerance, often escalate disputes. The Buddha's framework highlights the need for holistic solutions addressing systemic issues while fostering inner moral and psychological transformation in individuals.

uprisings.⁸

Buddhism identifies economic deprivation as a key disruptor of peace and advocates addressing poverty as a priority for the state. The *Kutadanta Sutta* highlights the futility of controlling crime and violence through force when poverty persists alongside wealth. Instead, it calls for addressing the root causes of such issues. Similarly, the *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta* underscores that sporadic acts of charity or punitive measures are inadequate to prevent social unrest in the face of persistent poverty. It warns that economic deprivation leads to moral decay and can culminate in brutal wars that dehumanize society.

Gautama the Buddha's analysis of social unrest is still relevant today, illustrating how material conditions influence human consciousness and behavior. While economic disparities and external factors play a significant role in conflicts, not all social unrest can be attributed solely to these factors. Even in conflicts arising from religious, ethnic, or cultural differences, economic factors often exacerbate tensions by limiting equal opportunities.

The Buddhist path to *Nibbāna* emphasizes personal transformation and moral development, enabling individuals to overcome negative emotions and behaviors associated with conflict. However, achieving *Nibbāna* is rare, raising questions about how Buddhism can contribute to societal peace if only a few attain such inner transformation. While a few individuals refraining from conflict may seem insufficient, their influence can serve as a model for others, promoting a culture of peace.

Buddhism recognizes that addressing poverty is necessary but not sufficient for achieving peace. The process requires both external measures to eliminate economic disparities and attention to the inner roots of human behavior. True and lasting peace depends on understanding and transforming these internal motivations.

The question of how conflicts arise is explored in texts like the *Suttanipata*, *Sakkaparibbajaniya Sutta*, and *Mahadukkhakkhanda Sutta*. The latter attributes conflict to the sense of desire at all levels of society. The *Madhupindika Sutta* delves deeper, identifying the psychological origins of conflict through an analysis of the sensory process.

According to the *Madhupindika Sutta*, conflict begins with sensory interaction. For example, when the eye perceives a material object, it gives rise to visual consciousness. This sensory contact leads to sensation, which in turn results in recognition or conceptualization. Recognition triggers thoughts, and these thoughts often become obsessive, causing one to dwell on material

⁸ In the *Kutadanta Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 5) and the *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* 26), the Buddha highlights the role of economic inequality and deprivation as key drivers of social conflict. These teachings suggest that societal peace is jeopardized when basic necessities and equal opportunities are withheld from certain groups. Poverty, in particular, is identified as a root cause that can lead to criminal behavior, rebellion, and armed uprisings, emphasizing the need for equitable distribution of resources to foster harmony.

objects of the past, present, or future.

This process, applicable to all senses, is closely linked to the deep-rooted tendencies of the mind.⁹ These tendencies include: attachment (*ragānusaya*); hatred (*paṭighānusaya*); dogmatic views (*diṭṭhānusaya*); doubt (*vicikicchānusaya*); conceit (*mānānusaya*); craving for existence (*bhavarāgānusaya*); ignorance (*avijjānusaya*). These latent tendencies, when combined with conceptual obsession (*papañca*), give rise to craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and dogmatic views (*diṭṭhi*), all of which perpetuate and intensify conflict. Understanding these psychological roots is crucial for addressing the causes of conflict and fostering both personal and societal peace. By breaking this cycle at both the internal and external levels, Buddhism offers a comprehensive approach to resolving conflicts and achieving harmony.

The mention of *diṭṭhi* (wrong view) as a form of *papañca* (conceptual proliferation) is crucial in Buddhism because it sheds light on one of the key psychological causes of conflict. *Diṭṭhi*, or clinging to rigid and dogmatic views, is identified as both a mental impurity and a latent tendency that perpetuates suffering and tension. This rigid mindset, characterized by the belief that “This alone is the truth, and everything else is false,” obstructs the understanding of reality. It fosters intolerance toward differing perspectives and often escalates into disputes and conflicts.

In texts such as the *Attakavagga* of the *Suttanipāta*, the Buddha frequently cautions against the dangers of clinging to views.¹⁰ He emphasizes that attachment to rigid opinions and dogmatic beliefs leads to conflict, suffering, and a distorted perception of reality. By letting go of such attachments, individuals can cultivate greater clarity, inner peace, and harmonious relationships.

He highlights how dogmatism, rooted in craving, leads to hatred, division, and ultimately social conflict. This insight underscores how individuals become trapped by their own erroneous thoughts, which arise from conditioned

⁹ *Anusaya* (Deep rooted tendencies) are the underlying mental dispositions or latent tendencies that influence thoughts, emotions, and actions. They are subtle and often subconscious, shaping how individuals react to external stimuli.

Role of *Papañca* (Conceptual Proliferation) refers to the mind’s tendency to overcomplicate and obsess over concepts, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. It amplifies the influence of the latent tendencies by creating distorted perceptions of reality. Craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and dogmatic views (*diṭṭhi*) are direct manifestations of these tendencies. Together, they fuel interpersonal and societal disputes by reinforcing attachment, ego, and rigid belief systems. The process applies to all sensory experiences (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental phenomena), demonstrating how deeply ingrained tendencies shape our interaction with the world.

¹⁰ The *Attakavagga* of the *Suttanipāta* teaches us that this is one of the earliest Buddhist texts, highlighting the importance of detachment from views and opinions. It emphasizes living a life free from disputes, guided by wisdom and understanding rather than dogmatism. The *Attakavagga* is particularly known for its teachings on non-attachment, non-conflict, and the dangers of ego-driven disputes.

perception and lack of understanding about the transient nature of sensory experiences.

Buddhism does not assume the existence of a permanent self or soul. Instead, it views perception as a conditioned and impermanent process. When sensory stimuli are encountered, they generate pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral sensations. These sensations can appear attractive or repulsive, leading to attachment or aversion. This cycle is further fueled by the ego, the false sense of self that tries to claim ownership where no real ownership exists.

The *Madhupindika Sutta* explains that by not delighting in or clinging to obsessive thoughts, individuals can end the latent tendencies that fuel conflict, such as lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), dogmatism (*diṭṭhi*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*). This cessation marks the resolution of disputes, accusations, and falsehoods, thereby fostering inner and social peace.¹¹

The *Sakkapariha Sutta*¹² identifies envy (*issa*)¹³ and miserliness (*macchhariya*)¹⁴ as immediate psychological causes of quarrels. Envy arises from dissatisfaction with others' successes, while miserliness stems from the tendency to hoard and protect one's possessions. The *Mahānidāna Sutta*¹⁵ further connects miserliness to craving (*taṇhā*) in the causal chain that leads to suffering (*dukkha*). This process begins with craving, develops through attachment (*upādāna*) and grasping (*pariggaha*), and culminates in miserliness,

¹¹ In Buddhist thought, attachment to views (*diṭṭhi-upādāna*) is one of the primary forms of clinging that perpetuates suffering (*dukkha*). This includes rigid adherence to personal beliefs, ideological systems, or philosophical doctrines. The Buddha encouraged openness, critical reflection, and flexibility in one's perspectives. He taught that liberation is achieved not through rigid belief systems but through direct insight (*vipassanā*) into the nature of existence. The teachings in the *Attakavagga* remain profoundly relevant in contemporary contexts, where ideological divisions often lead to conflict. By practicing non-attachment to views, individuals can foster mutual understanding and reduce disputes.

¹² *Sakkapariha Sutta* (Discourses on Disputes) explores the psychological underpinnings of quarrels and disputes. It emphasizes that resolving these negative tendencies requires ethical conduct (*sīla*), mindfulness (*sati*), and understanding (*paññā*).

¹³ *Issa* (Envy) is defined as a feeling of resentment or displeasure toward the achievements or possessions of others. In Buddhism, envy is considered defilement (*kilesa*) that obstructs personal growth and harmony in relationships.

¹⁴ *Macchhariya* (Miserliness) refers to the unwillingness to share or give, driven by an excessive attachment to one's material or emotional possessions. Miserliness reflects a mindset rooted in fear and scarcity, which often manifests as defensive or aggressive behavior.

¹⁵ *Mahānidāna Sutta* (The Great Discourse on Causation) is a foundational text in Buddhist philosophy, elaborates on the principle of Dependent Origination (*paṭicca samuppāda*), explaining how craving leads to suffering. Miserliness is situated within this causal chain, illustrating how craving evolves into attachment, grasping, and protective behavior, ultimately fostering conflict. By addressing envy and miserliness, individuals can break free from harmful cycles of craving and attachment, paving the way for harmonious relationships and societal peace. Practices like generosity (*dāna*) and joy in others' success (*muditā*) are recommended antidotes to these tendencies.

which provokes protective and often conflict-inducing behavior.

When individuals fear losing their possessions, especially in a world of limited resources, they react with force or violence when these are threatened. Conflict becomes particularly severe when motivated by envy on one side and miserliness on the other. This dynamic is intensified by the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and qualities like beauty or intelligence, which some possess and others desire.

In a hypothetical world with unlimited resources and boundless compassion, such conflicts might not arise. However, in reality, resources are finite, and human sympathies are limited. The scarcity of resources and the disparity in qualities people value create conditions for envy and miserliness, which lead to social conflict.

Even if all economic inequalities were addressed, conflicts would persist over non-material desires such as power, status, or influence. Therefore, striving for complete equality is both impractical and unrealistic. The inherent inequalities of the human condition make it necessary for humanity to coexist with disparity.

In this context, Buddhism advocates for inner spiritual transformation as the ultimate solution to dissatisfaction and conflict. True satisfaction arises not from endlessly altering external conditions to match personal desires, but from cultivating inner peace and understanding the impermanence of all things. By addressing the psychological roots of attachment, craving, and ego, individuals can transcend the cycle of conflict and find lasting peace, even in a world of inherent inequalities.

II. INNER TRANSFORMATION

Even though social injustices and inequalities can be alleviated by addressing the unjust distribution of resources, humanity's failure to achieve lasting peace lies in its lack of inner discipline. Attempts to resolve such issues through the same destructive traits that perpetuate them, anger, hatred, jealousy, and fear, often result in temporary changes at best, rather than lasting solutions. These emotional responses only perpetuate the cycle of violence, preventing the establishment of enduring peace.

According to Gautama the Buddha, all unwholesome behavior can be traced back to three main psychological roots, i.e. greed, hatred, and delusion. These internal causes of conflict must be transformed through a shift in one's attitudes and behaviors, rooted in wisdom and compassion. The Buddhist path to *Nibbāna* (enlightenment) gradually eradicates these psychological disturbances by guiding individuals to achieve psychological adjustment and inner tranquility. By eliminating greed, hatred, and delusion, one can address the root causes of conflict both within the self and in society.

From the Buddhist perspective, social unrest is a consequence of psychological maladjustment. When individuals are caught in confused thinking and unwise reflections, negative emotions like craving, greed, envy, and hatred arise. These emotions spread contagiously, influencing

the collective mindset and fostering an environment conducive to war and violence. The solution lies in cultivating wise reflection and abandoning these harmful mental afflictions that disturb inner peace.¹⁶

Both individuals and society as a whole must replace collective anger, ill-will, and envy with positive attitudes of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These wholesome qualities must be expressed through actions such as giving and sharing, engaging in kind verbal communication, treating others equally, and committing to the welfare of all beings. Only when individuals internalize these qualities can a society built on these values begin to emerge.

III. INNER CHANGE AND PATH OF PEACE

Buddhism places a strong emphasis on inner change as the foundation of peace.¹⁷ This change can be achieved through moral education, which aligns with the principles of mental cultivation. The mental discipline advocated by Buddhism complements educational psychology and offers a valuable resource for developing educational theories focused on peace-building.¹⁸ However, in today's world, there is a pressing need for educational systems that prioritize the promotion of peace. Unfortunately, moral education has diminished over time, overshadowed by an emphasis on science and technology. As a result, the mechanistic approach to problem-solving neglects the crucial role that human thought, behavior, and emotional development play in shaping a peaceful society.

In the Western world, behaviorism focuses on stimulus-response mechanisms, dominates psychological discourse, overlooking the potential for inner transformation. Buddhism, however, addresses this flaw by emphasizing

¹⁶ Buddhism views social unrest as an external manifestation of internal disturbances. Negative mental states like greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*) disrupt individual harmony, which then radiates outward to affect societal dynamics.

Negative mental afflictions like craving (*taṇhā*), greed (*lobha*), and hatred (*dosa*) disturb inner peace and perpetuate suffering. Their abandonment is achieved through ethical conduct (*sīla*), meditation (*bhāvanā*), and wisdom (*paññā*), leading to personal and societal harmony.

¹⁷ Buddhism emphasizes inner change as the foundation for peace, advocating for moral education rooted in mental cultivation. Unlike mechanistic approaches, which prioritize external solutions, Buddhism focuses on the transformative power of human thought, behavior, and emotions. The Eightfold Path offers a framework for moral education, guiding individuals toward desirable behavior, emotional growth, and peace-building. Modern challenges, such as inequality and unrest, require a holistic approach that integrates internal transformation with external actions.

¹⁸ Buddhism addresses the limitations of behaviorism by highlighting the internal causes of conflict, which are often neglected in traditional psychological models. Its methods of mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*) hold psychological and educational value, offering tools for moral education and peace-building. By promoting personal effort and rejecting reliance on external forces, Buddhism underscores the role of human agency in shaping both individuals and society. This perspective is crucial in addressing contemporary moral crises and building a peaceful society.

that the root causes of human conflict and behavior lie within the mind. The neglect of these internal dimensions in traditional psychological models fails to address the fundamental source of many conflicts.

The Eightfold Path of Buddhism offers a practical framework that can serve as the foundation for moral education and peace-building programs. The methods of mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*) prescribed in Buddhism, often misunderstood as mere religious rituals, hold immense psychological value. These methods can help develop applied psychology to promote desirable behavior, foster emotional development, and guide moral education. Buddhism emphasizes human agency, the importance of personal effort, willpower, and determination in effecting change. It rejects the notion of external or mystical forces bringing about transformation, instead focusing on the power of human action to shape both individual lives and society.

A purely mechanistic view of life, which seeks solutions solely through external adjustments, is inadequate in addressing the current moral crisis. Contemporary challenges, rooted in inequality, political unrest, and entrenched power dynamics cannot be resolved merely through external solutions. Instead, we need a comprehensive approach that incorporates both external and internal transformation. Buddhism's insights into human nature and behavior can guide us in tackling this crisis, offering a path that combines inner transformation with external action.

IV. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PROMOTING PEACE

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping human behavior and thinking. However, the failure of educational systems to substantially promote peace suggests either a lack of serious application of educational principles in this regard or a fundamental flaw in how education has been applied.¹⁹ The Buddhist path of spiritual training can be viewed as an educational journey guiding individuals from ignorance to understanding, from delusion to enlightenment. The emphasis is on cultivating wisdom, self-transformation, and moral development, drawing on universal psychological principles that apply to all human beings, regardless of cultural or sectarian identity.

Despite the challenges presented by sectarian divisions, Buddhism's universal principles can be adopted to develop educational programs that foster peace and understanding. Even if Buddhism is not widely practiced in its traditional forms, its core teachings offer valuable insights into human nature and conflict resolution that transcend cultural and religious boundaries.

¹⁹ Education significantly influences human behavior and thinking, yet its failure to adequately promote peace highlights either a lack of serious implementation or flaws in its application. The Buddhist path serves as an educational framework, guiding individuals from ignorance to enlightenment through wisdom, self-transformation, and moral development. Drawing on universal psychological principles, Buddhism provides insights that transcend sectarian and cultural boundaries. Its teachings can inform educational programs that foster peace, understanding, and effective conflict resolution, regardless of whether Buddhism is practiced traditionally.

V. APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

While Buddhism offers profound insights into conflict resolution, merely having Buddhism as a dominant religious influence in society is insufficient to reduce conflict and violence. The teachings of Buddhism can only be effective when properly understood and integrated into the fabric of both individual and communal life. Misapplication or misunderstanding of Buddhist principles can lead to harmful consequences, as illustrated by the analogy of handling a cobra by its tail. Just as mishandling a cobra can result in harm, so too can misapplying Buddhist teachings create unintended negative outcomes.²⁰

The Buddhist path is not a mechanical solution to problems but rather a framework for transforming individuals and communities in a way that reduces suffering and conflict. For these teachings to be effective, they must be freely adopted and integrated into the educational and cultural practices of a community. If there is no substantial evidence of Buddhist principles being properly integrated into societal practices, it is not fair to criticize Buddhism for failing to reduce conflict and violence. Instead, attention should be directed toward how Buddhist principles can be better applied in ways that promote peace and understanding.

VI. A VISION FOR PEACE

It may be said in summary that Buddhism offers profound insights into the nature of conflict and the quest for peace. It identifies the root causes of conflict as both external socio-economic factors and internal psychological tendencies. Buddhism's emphasis on inner transformation as the foundation for societal peace provides a comprehensive solution to global unrest. By promoting a shift in individual attitudes and behaviors through moral education and spiritual training, Buddhism advocates for the cultivation of peace within the self as the starting point for building a harmonious society. The effectiveness of Buddhist teachings in promoting peace depends on their proper understanding and application within communities.²¹ It is not enough to simply adhere to

²⁰ Buddhist teachings provide valuable insights for conflict resolution, but their effectiveness depends on proper understanding and integration into individual and communal life. Misapplication or misunderstanding of these teachings can lead to negative consequences, akin to mishandling a cobra. The Buddhist path is not a mechanical solution but a transformative framework aimed at reducing suffering and conflict. For these principles to yield results, they must be freely adopted and woven into a community's educational and cultural practices. Criticism of Buddhism for failing to reduce violence is unwarranted if its principles have not been properly implemented; instead, efforts should focus on applying these teachings in ways that foster peace and understanding.

²¹ The success of Buddhist teachings in fostering peace depends on their proper understanding and integration into educational and cultural practices. Mere adherence to Buddhism as a religious influence is insufficient; active application of its principles is essential. While challenges exist in fully leveraging these teachings, their universal values of compassion, wisdom, and inner peace offer practical guidance for overcoming moral crises and building a more just and peaceful world.

Buddhism as a religious influence; these teachings must be actively integrated into educational and cultural practices to foster meaningful change. While challenges remain in fully realizing the potential of Buddhist teachings for peace-building, they offer invaluable wisdom and practical guidance for addressing the moral crises of our time. By embracing the universal principles of compassion, wisdom, and inner peace, both individuals and societies can move toward a more just, peaceful, and harmonious world.

VII. CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR GLOBAL HARMONY

Cultivating inner peace is the process of developing mental calm, emotional stability, and a sense of inner harmony. It involves nurturing a peaceful mind free from anxiety, anger, and conflict, while guiding thoughts, emotions, and actions with clarity, compassion, and self-awareness. Inner peace is not simply the absence of stress; it is an ongoing practice of maintaining balance and resilience amid life's challenges.

The cultivation of inner peace is foundational to world peace. Individuals who achieve inner tranquility contribute positively to their families, communities, and societies. When people are at peace within themselves, they are less likely to engage in conflict and more likely to spread kindness and understanding. Here's how inner peace contributes to global harmony:

Inner peace helps individuals manage emotions like anger, resentment, and hostility. By practicing mindfulness and emotional regulation, individuals become less reactive to challenges, resulting in fewer conflicts. This calm approach allows for healthier relationships and reduced internal conflict.

When individuals cultivate inner peace, they reduce negative emotions and create a ripple effect of positivity in their surroundings. People less controlled by anger, frustration, or envy are more capable of responding to challenges with compassion and understanding. This inner transformation contributes to peaceful interactions within families, communities, and societies, and ultimately promotes global peace.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The tragic events of history, from the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel-Gaza conflict to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, highlight the catastrophic consequences of war and the fragile state of peace. Despite the immense suffering caused by such conflicts, humanity has yet to prioritize lasting peace. Wars displace millions, destroy communities, and raise the pressing question of whether such devastation is ever justifiable.

Gautama the Buddha's teachings offer profound insights into the roots of conflict and the path to peace. By addressing greed, hatred, and delusion within individuals, Buddhism emphasizes that inner transformation is essential for achieving societal harmony. It reframes conflict as stemming not only from external circumstances but from internal turmoil, urging mindfulness, compassion, and non-violence as antidotes to ignorance and aggression.

Buddhism does not advocate passive acceptance of injustice but promotes a balanced approach, integrating personal transformation with social reform.

It highlights the interconnectedness of individual and societal well-being, addressing not only poverty and inequality but also the moral growth necessary for lasting peace.

Moreover, the Buddha's wisdom applies to conflicts of all scales from global wars to everyday disputes demonstrating the importance of reducing attachment, aversion, and ignorance. While peace is an ongoing process rather than a utopian ideal, Buddhism provides a practical framework for reducing suffering, fostering ethical behavior, and committing to both personal and collective transformation for a more harmonious world.

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VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION AND SOCIAL HARMONY: ETHICAL INSIGHTS FOR MODERN TIMES

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Abstract:

The contemporary era witnesses an unprecedented convergence of science and spirituality, prompting deeper inquiry into their mutual contributions to human well-being. Among various spiritual traditions, Buddhist practices, particularly *vipassanā* meditation, have garnered global interest for their potential in promoting physical health, mental clarity, and ethical conduct. *vipassanā*, a profound practice rooted in mindfulness and insight, not only facilitates self-transformation but also fosters social harmony. The convergence of science and spirituality presents unprecedented opportunities for addressing contemporary challenges. *vipassanā* meditation, a central practice in Buddhist contemplative traditions, has garnered growing recognition for its potential to enhance health and ethical well-being. Recent clinical research underscores the physiological benefits of meditation, while its role in fostering social ethics remains an evolving field of study. This paper explores the contributions of *vipassanā* meditation to individual transformation and social harmony, highlighting its capacity to alleviate stress, cultivate mindfulness, and promote ethical conduct. Furthermore, we analyze its impact on addressing modern social problems, advocating for its integration into contemporary society for personal and collective well-being.

Keywords: *Science and spirituality, vipassanā meditation, mindfulness, ethical conduct, social harmony.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary era witnesses an unprecedented convergence of science and spirituality, prompting deeper inquiry into their mutual contributions to human well-being. Among various spiritual traditions, Buddhist practices, particularly *vipassanā* meditation, have garnered global interest for their

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potential in promoting physical health, mental clarity, and ethical conduct. *Vipassanā*, a profound practice rooted in mindfulness and insight, not only facilitates self-transformation but also fosters social harmony. This paper examines the role of *vipassanā* meditation in modern society, emphasizing its impact on individual well-being and its contributions to ethical and moral development.

The convergence of science and spirituality presents unprecedented opportunities for addressing contemporary challenges. *Vipassanā* meditation, a central practice in Buddhist contemplative traditions, has garnered growing recognition for its potential to enhance health and ethical well-being. Recent clinical research underscores the physiological benefits of meditation, while its role in fostering social ethics remains an evolving field of study. The growing intersection of spirituality and science has led to an increased interest in contemplative practices such as *vipassanā* meditation. Historically rooted in Buddhist traditions, *vipassanā* emphasizes mindfulness and insight into the nature of reality.¹ As modern societies grapple with stress, ethical dilemmas, and social fragmentation, meditation emerges as a viable tool for enhancing well-being and fostering moral responsibility.² This paper examines the role of *vipassanā* meditation in modern society, analyzing its contributions to ethical living and social harmony.

Today, science and spirituality have the potential to be closer than ever and to embark upon a collaborative endeavor that has far-reaching potential to help humanity meet the challenges before us. Buddhist concepts and practices have attracted the attention of humans in the world for decades; however, only in recent years has it become evident that *vipassanā* practices might have an important role in enhancing health and the quality of everyday ethical life.

Several clinical research studies indicate a potential wide array of physiological benefits of *vipassanā* contemplative practices. Part of the reason for these discoveries is that many more Westerners are now being trained in the Buddhist contemplative traditions, and now they are educating the general population through their *vipassanā* practices and teachings. More powerful driving forces are the technological advancements that enable scientists to measure the changes taking place in our bodies, including the brain, during the *vipassanā* meditation practices.

II. BUDDHISM: A PATH TO HUMANISM, NOT JUST INSTITUTIONS

Buddhism, at its core, is a path of mindfulness and peace. Its presence is not measured by the number of schools, hospitals, or political entities run by Buddhists but by how these institutions embody humanism, love, tolerance, and enlightenment, qualities that Buddhism nurtures to develop the best aspects of human nature. This is the true spirit of Buddhism. The preservation of

¹ Gethin, R. (1998). *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford University Press, p. 45.

² Ricard, M. (2014). *Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the World*. Little, Brown and Company, p. 78.

Buddhism or Buddhist society is secondary to the development of individuals with enough moral courage and inner strength to help transform collective consciousness. In today's world, those of us working in society, confronting power and injustice daily, often become worn out and disillusioned. At least once a year, we need to retreat to spiritual centers to replenish our energy and continue our work for social change. Spiritual masters are like fresh springs of water; those who engage with society need to carry that pure water to nourish the land, trees, and life around them. If we neglect to return to the spring for renewal, our minds, like polluted water, lose their purity, and we become less capable of nourishing those around us. Practicing meditation or prayer daily, whether morning or evening, helps to maintain that inner clarity.

For those of us working in society, we must be mindful of how easily we can become polluted by negative emotions like greed, hatred, or the desire for power. It is easy to be seduced by the desire for more wealth, recognition or to align ourselves with those in power. However, this path is dangerous. True religion requires a commitment to personal transformation, to becoming more selfless and taking moral responsibility for our actions and the state of society. This principle has been the essence of religion from ancient times to the present.

III. THE GLOBAL SPREAD OF MEDITATION

Meditation is gaining worldwide recognition, with international cooperation growing. *Vipassanā* meditation, in particular, has expanded across continents. Dr. S. N. Goenka and his assistant teachers have brought these teachings to the West, while Western teachers now conduct courses in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The demand for meditation courses is rising globally, creating opportunities to bridge long-standing racial, social, and economic divides. Each year, thousands of people from diverse backgrounds participate in these courses. Business leaders integrate Dharma principles into their organizations while schoolchildren learn mindfulness techniques. Meditation centers welcome individuals from all walks of life, including underprivileged communities. If this growth continues, it holds the potential to dissolve historical barriers and foster a more harmonious world.

Even when working toward positive societal change, we must confront our limitations and the resistance of others. True transformation demands inner strength. By incorporating Dharma into our lives, we develop confidence, determination, awareness, concentration, and wisdom. Meditation not only fosters relaxation but also nurtures resilience and clarity, qualities essential for making balanced decisions in an increasingly complex world. Ultimately, meditation is more than a practice, it is a way of life. It offers a sanctuary from external pressures, a means of self-discovery, and a path to collective well-being. In embracing it, we contribute not only to our personal growth but also to the betterment of society as a whole.

Meditation cultivates self-awareness and emotional regulation, which contribute to both personal and societal well-being. Research indicates that regular meditation practice enhances cognitive flexibility and reduces

stress-related responses.³ In Buddhist philosophy, attaining jhāna (a deep meditative absorption) fosters tranquility and ethical clarity, which aligns with contemporary psychological findings on mindfulness.⁴ Furthermore, vipassanā meditation promotes pro-social behavior by increasing empathy and compassion.⁵ As a result, individuals practicing mindfulness exhibit higher levels of patience, altruism, and ethical engagement in social interactions.⁶ These benefits suggest that meditation serves as a transformation practice for personal and collective well-being.

Practitioners of vipassanā experience profound psychological and physiological changes, resulting in heightened self-awareness, emotional regulation, and a deep sense of inner peace. One significant achievement in meditative practice is the attainment of jhāna states, which involve deep concentration and ecstatic tranquility. These states enhance mental focus, allowing practitioners to cultivate wisdom and detachment from material distractions. Beyond personal bliss, vipassanā meditation helps individuals overcome their ego and body-consciousness, leading to a reduction in suffering, stress, and conflicts. The practice instills a habit of detached observation, enabling individuals to respond to life's challenges with equanimity. This, in turn, creates a ripple effect, influencing interpersonal relationships and fostering a peaceful societal environment.

IV. THE BENEFIT OF ONESELF AND OTHERS

In today's fast-paced world, where activity, achievements, and results are highly valued, it may seem surprising that more people are turning to meditation. Despite the constant motion of modern society, many still feel a deep need for silence, inner peace, and moments of reflection. Meditation not only helps reduce stress and promote relaxation but also offers profound benefits. Among these, Buddhist meditation provides three key advantages. First, those who meditate regularly will find that the calm and concentration cultivated during their practice extend into their daily lives. While meditation does not eliminate life's challenges, it enhances our ability to face them with greater clarity and resilience. A foundation of inner tranquility begins to take root, providing a fresh sense of perspective. Though fears, disappointments, irritations, and unexpected events will still arise, their impact will be softened by our inner peace. As a result, we become less reactive, more composed, and less likely to be provoked into impulsive words or actions. Over time, meditators notice a marked improvement in the quality of their sessions and

³ Davidson, R. J., & Goleman, D. (2017). *Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body*. Avery, p. 98.

⁴. Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10 (2), p. 144 - 156.

⁵ Goldin, P. R., & Gross, J. J. (2010). Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on emotion regulation in social anxiety disorder. *Emotion*, 10 (1), p. 83 - 91.

⁶. Shapiro, S. L., et al. (2011). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 67(3), p. 374 - 386.

their overall sense of well-being.

The second and third benefits are more advanced and difficult to attain. One involves entering ecstatic trances, known as *jhānas*, which Buddhist scholars have carefully analyzed and classified into distinct stages. The journey to the first *jhāna*, the foundational level, begins with disciplined focus. Thought processes become more refined, gradually centering on a single theme. As mental distractions fade, conceptual thought gives way to pure awareness. A deep sense of joy and tranquility emerges, leading to a state of undivided, conflict-free concentration. Eventually, there is a breakthrough into an elevated state of consciousness, known as the first *jhāna*. This experience brings unparalleled bliss, with effects that linger beyond the meditation session. Importantly, this state is not attributed to divine intervention but rather to a natural process of human development. The third benefit involves the cultivation of extraordinary abilities, or psychic powers (*iddhi*), which advanced meditators can develop through specific practices. Buddhist meditation manuals outline techniques for attaining these abilities, emphasizing the need for mastery over *jhānas*. A practitioner must be able to enter these states at will and in any sequence before progressing toward the development of higher faculties.

In essence, Buddhist meditation offers more than relaxation; it provides a path to inner stability, heightened states of consciousness, and even the possibility of extraordinary abilities, making it a profound practice for those willing to embark on its journey. For the followers of the Buddha, the ability to perform miracles and see visions is but a side product of meditation. It may be gratifying and pleasurable, however, it does not lead one nearer to the goal, which is release from the cause of suffering.⁷

V. MEDITATION AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Throughout history, societies have faced conflicts, from family disputes to tribal warfare and international conflicts. Individuals have suffered from discrimination, oppression, and unhealthy environments, often reacting with fear and mistrust. There have always been those who seek to rectify social injustices, sometimes losing hope in the process. At the root of these struggles are the same forces, hatred, greed, and ignorance, that reside in the human mind. Therefore, the solution must begin at the individual level. Dharma can be understood as a scientific path of self-exploration and wisdom, one that cultivates positive mental qualities while discouraging negative reactions. However, it requires disciplined practice rather than mere theoretical discussions. When we meditate regularly, we experience relaxation, inner peace, and happiness. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle: meditation brings joy, which in turn motivates further meditation. Over time, it becomes an automatic habit, a natural part of our daily lives.

Starting the day with meditation allows its peaceful effects to carry through all activities, much like nourishing the body before undertaking

⁷ H.S. Sobti (Ed.) (2003), *vipassanā: The Buddhist Way*, Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, p. 98.

strenuous tasks. It helps us access our inner reserves of tranquility, enabling us to navigate stress and challenges with greater ease. Through meditation, we cultivate the ability to observe our thoughts and emotions with detachment, preventing them from controlling us. This equanimity gradually extends to daily interactions, fostering a calm and harmonious presence that positively influences those around us.

VI. MEDITATION AS A PATH TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Beyond relaxation, meditation serves as a powerful tool for spiritual growth, guiding us toward self-enlightenment and, in Buddhist terms, *nibbāna*. It helps dissolve the ego and the fixation on bodily identity, both of which are major sources of suffering, conflict, and tension. Meditation reveals that our true nature is connected to a higher, transcendental consciousness. Dharma plays a crucial role in addressing societal challenges in three key ways:

Eliminating mental defilements: By removing negative tendencies within ourselves, we prevent further suffering in society. (2) Building resilience: Meditation helps us endure the stress of modern life, from competitive work environments to social injustices. (3) Empowering social contribution: It strengthens individuals engaged in serving and improving society, such as social workers, doctors, and educators.

The role of Dharma (moral teachings) in addressing contemporary social challenges is profound. Meditation aids in eliminating mental defilements that drive unethical behavior, thereby fostering societal harmony.⁸ In addition, meditation helps individuals cope with stressors such as competitiveness and social inequality.⁹ By cultivating ethical mindfulness, individuals become more resilient and engaged in social justice efforts.¹⁰ Global initiatives reflect the widespread acceptance of *vipassanā* meditation. The teachings of S. N. Goenka have influenced practitioners worldwide, fostering intercultural exchange and ethical commitment.¹¹ Such efforts illustrate meditation's potential to bridge socioeconomic and racial divides, reinforcing its role in promoting global peace. *Vipassanā* Meditation and Social Responsibility can be addressed in the following ways:

(1) The Buddha's teachings on suffering and its resolution: The Buddha's fundamental teachings, encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths, emphasize that suffering is inherent in human existence, its root cause being craving and attachment. The cessation of suffering is achievable through the Eightfold Path, which includes ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom. *Vipassanā* meditation serves as a practical tool

⁸ Nhat Hanh, T. (1998). *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*. Broadway Books, p. 34.

⁹ Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), p. 822 - 848.

¹⁰ Kearney, D. J., et al. (2013). Mindfulness-based stress reduction in Gulf War veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 69 (2), p. 146 - 157.

¹¹ Hart, W. (1987). *The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation as Taught by S. N. Goenka*. HarperOne, p. 67.

for actualizing these principles, guiding individuals toward a state of inner freedom and social responsibility. (2) The role of mindfulness in ethical living: Mindfulness, a core element of *vipassanā*, enhances ethical awareness by promoting conscious decision-making. The practice enables individuals to engage in self-reflection, thereby minimizing impulsive reactions driven by anger or greed. As a result, meditation practitioners cultivate an ethical way of life that benefits both personal and communal well-being. (3) The influence of meditation on social and global issues: In the contemporary world, marked by economic disparity, political conflicts, and environmental degradation, meditation offers a path to reconciliation and sustainable living. Notable Buddhist scholars and social activists, such as Thich Nhat Hanh, advocate for mindfulness as a means to foster peace, justice, and humanitarian efforts. Furthermore, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the arms race pose existential threats to humanity. *Vipassanā* meditation, by instilling a sense of universal compassion, encourages individuals and leaders to embrace nonviolence and ethical responsibility in policy-making and international relations.

VII. MEDITATION AS A REMEDY FOR SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Vipassanā meditation extends its benefits beyond individual well-being by addressing broader social challenges. By eliminating mental defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion, practitioners contribute to a more ethical and compassionate society. The threefold role of Dharma in addressing social problems includes eliminating negative mental tendencies that lead to unethical behavior. Providing resilience against stress and adversity in an increasingly competitive world. Empowering individuals to serve and uplift society through ethical conduct. The transformational power of meditation is evident in the global expansion of *vipassanā* centers, where individuals from diverse backgrounds gather to learn and practice ethical living. This international collaboration signifies the potential of *vipassanā* in bridging cultural, racial, and economic barriers.

VIII. ADDRESSING MODERN-DAY PROBLEMS THROUGH MEDITATION

The founder of Buddhism was an ordinary human being who, driven by profound concern about life, death, and suffering, uncovered a universal and transformational solution to these fundamental issues. His insight was radical because it did not just address a specific form of suffering but suffering itself in all its manifestations. He did not invent the cause or the cure of suffering but simply discovered them, insights that anyone, at any time, could uncover. The Buddha's role was that of a doctor diagnosing and curing the ills of humankind. Buddhist liberation, or *nibbāna*, does not require the mastery of complex doctrines or extreme ascetic practices. In fact, the Buddha condemned both excessive austerity and intellectual learning that did not directly confront the vital questions of life and death. The core of his original teaching remains the same across all Buddhist traditions and is encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths are (1) suffering exists, (2) the cause of suffering is desire or craving,

(3) the cessation of suffering is possible and (4) the way to end suffering is the Eightfold Path. However, understanding these truths intellectually is insufficient. They must be practiced and integrated into daily life. Just as medicine in a bottle is useless unless taken, understanding the Four Noble Truths alone is not enough. One must embody these truths in their actions and thoughts.

The nature of suffering and the path to freedom: The early Buddhists identified many forms of suffering, which we often try to ignore by distracting ourselves with external factors like television, music, or constant busyness. We remain active, always thinking, doing, and fleeing from confronting our inner discomfort. Yet, when we look deeply within, we cannot deny that suffering exists in various forms. The Buddha's insight is that we will never experience true peace until we address this fundamental anxiety. He offered us a clear path to overcome it. Suffering is inescapable, it is part of life. To be a Buddhist is to accept this truth and to share in the suffering of others. The Buddha taught that worldly conditions like gain and loss, dignity and obscurity, praise and blame, and happiness and pain are inevitable parts of the human experience. While most people attempt to avoid negative experiences in pursuit of the positive, those who follow the Buddha's teachings approach both joy and hardship with equanimity. They do not cling to one or the other but instead test their inner spiritual strength by embracing both, regardless of external circumstances.

Mindfulness: The key to transforming suffering: To truly practice the Buddha's teachings, one must cultivate mindfulness, an awareness that permeates one's body, feelings, mind, and the objects of the mind. This may sound simple, but it requires sustained effort and often guidance from a teacher and a community of fellow practitioners. In Buddhist terms, these individuals are referred to as "good friends," though they need not necessarily identify as Buddhists themselves. Selfless and compassionate individuals from any faith or background can serve as good friends, offering support in our journey of transformation. In order to live according to the Buddha's teachings, one must engage with a community, the *saṅgha*, that provides mutual support and encouragement. These communities, such as the Buddhist monastic orders in Asia, can be instrumental in fostering openness, love, and selflessness. Their involvement in today's world can help make the teachings of Buddhism more relevant and accessible to a global audience.

Buddhism's social engagement: Many in the West often view Buddhism solely as a personal tool for meditation and transformation, distancing it from social involvement. This view neglects the Buddha's teaching of interdependence and the doctrine of no-self. Buddhism is not just a path to individual liberation but a means of transcending the limitations of the self, recognizing that we are all connected. Because of this, Buddhism naturally extends its concern beyond personal development to the well-being of all beings, including social and political matters. In Southeast Asia, for centuries, Buddhists have been concerned with both attaining personal liberation and maintaining a just social order. To suggest that Buddhism is unconcerned with

societal organization ignores a long history of engagement with social issues. Buddhism, in its full depth, addresses not only the internal struggles of the individual but also the external structures that shape our world.

IX. PERSONAL SALVATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN BUDDHISM

Buddhism has traditionally recognized personal salvation and social justice as interconnected aspects of the same path. In Vietnam, the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, founder of Van Hanh University and the School of Youth for Social Service, has been a profound voice for both. With experience teaching at Columbia University and the Sorbonne, Thich Nhat Hanh has shared his teachings and mindfulness practices across the globe. During the war in Vietnam, both institutions he founded displayed remarkable courage and compassion. Thich Nhat Hanh once proposed that modern Buddhists need retreat monasteries and spiritual centers, places of peace and renewal.¹² In the fast-paced, often stressful environments of cities, practicing mindfulness daily may not be enough to replenish one's strength. He suggested that both clergy and laypeople who dedicate themselves to social service should regularly retreat to these centers to restore their inner energy. Without this renewal, social workers will find it difficult to maintain their endurance in the face of the world's struggles.

The power of mindful presence: In Buddhism, the presence of a single mindful individual can have a profound effect on society, underscoring the significance of mindfulness in everyday life. The concept of "emptiness of action" or "non-action" means acting in ways that influence all situations peacefully and non-violently. The greatest contribution of masters on the spiritual path is not their outward actions but their presence. Their mindfulness, love, wisdom, and peace resonate in every action and interaction. This awakened presence is a critical and foundational contribution. Though their presence may seem passive, those who have attained spiritual awakening live dynamically, speaking a living language that addresses contemporary life and its challenges. If spiritual leaders rely on empty clichés and words without relevance to the modern world, their teachings will lose meaning. Religious institutions may persist, but without a connection to spiritual depth, they become hollow forms, devoid of genuine content. For those who embody their religion, awareness arises from lived experience, not just tradition or books.

X. THE ROLE OF MEDITATION IN TRANSFORMATION

Buddhism places great emphasis on looking inward as the path to personal and societal transformation. Meditation is its most distinctive practice, leading to heightened self-awareness. This awareness fosters acceptance and, in turn, a generosity of spirit that empowers us for the compassionate work the world requires. Through self-awareness, we can engage with people of all faiths to work toward mutual betterment and a more harmonious world. In recent

¹² Thich Nhat Hanh (2005), *Transformation & Healing: Sutra on the four Establishments of Mindfulness*, New Delhi: A Full Circle Book, p.180.

decades, meditation has gained widespread popularity in the Western world, with numerous studies highlighting its health benefits. Meditation practices have spread across cultures, and figures like His Holiness the Dalai Lama have become globally respected spiritual leaders. While Eastern meditation methods dominate the worldwide scene, the West has also developed its forms of meditation, such as transmutation meditation and those influenced by modern technology. In this way, meditation has become a universal tool for personal and collective growth.

XI. CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN MEDITATION PRACTICE

Buddhism offers a pragmatic approach to suffering, emphasizing mindfulness as a means of overcoming existential distress.¹³ The Four Noble Truths highlight the need to address craving and attachment, which underlie many societal conflicts.¹⁴ As technological advancements create distractions and ethical dilemmas, meditation serves as a counterbalance by nurturing inner peace and self-awareness.¹⁵ Furthermore, *vipassanā* meditation has been integrated into therapeutic interventions for trauma and anxiety.¹⁶ Mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to enhance emotional resilience and reduce psychological distress, reinforcing the relevance of Buddhist practices in modern psychology.¹⁷

Despite its immense potential, the practice of *vipassanā* requires patience, discipline, and perseverance. Beginners often struggle with the wandering mind, necessitating consistent practice and guidance. Additionally, the integration of meditation into mainstream education and professional life remains a challenge. Societal misconceptions about meditation as a religious or esoteric practice hinder its acceptance as a universal tool for well-being and ethical development.

To maximize the impact of *vipassanā* meditation, it is imperative to encourage scientific research on meditation's benefits to strengthen its credibility. Integrate mindfulness programs into schools, workplaces, and healthcare institutions. Foster cross-cultural collaboration in meditation practices to promote global harmony.

XII. DHARMA IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

As society evolves, communication has become faster and more accessible, workplaces more competitive, and academic pressures more intense. These

¹³ Harvey, P. (2013). *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴ Rahula, W. (2007). *What the Buddha Taught*. Grove Press, p. 77.

¹⁵ Wallace, B. A., & Shapiro, S. L. (2006). Mental balance and well-being: Building bridges between Buddhism and Western psychology. *American Psychologist*, 61 (7), p. 690 - 701.

¹⁶ Goyal, M., et al. (2014). Meditation programs for psychological stress and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 174 (3), p. 357 - 368.

¹⁷ Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. Guilford Press, p. 85.

shifts have increased stress levels and mental health concerns, necessitating solutions rooted in wisdom rather than mere knowledge and resources. Traditional institutions, families, schools, and religious groups once played a central role in providing moral guidance. However, their influence has waned, leading to tensions between generations. While younger people blame elders for their rigidity, the older generation criticizes youth for lacking respect. Both perspectives stem from the same fundamental issue: Attachment and craving. By embracing pure Dharma rather than narrow sectarian beliefs, younger generations can cultivate genuine respect for their teachers, while elders can recognize the futility of clinging to outdated customs. While individual responsibility is crucial, societal support systems are also necessary. Some people succumb to materialistic desires, leading to debt and despair; others turn to alcohol and drugs, while some resort to violence and crime. As previously mentioned, Dharma offers solutions at three levels: Eliminating inner defilements, helping individuals bear suffering, and strengthening those who work to uplift others.

XIII. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, nations have reached the pitch of insanity, especially in the armament race of building up military hardware, which endangers all forms of existence on the earth. If mankind does not start learning how to live peacefully with one another and use science and technology responsibly, it is doubtful if human civilization, as we know it, can long exist. In every country today, people are trying to produce nuclear weapons for destructive purposes. It is a big competition. They also produce biological and chemical weapons for the destruction of human beings. Just as a chain is as strong as the strength of its individual links, for there to be peace and happiness in the world, individuals comprising of families, societies and ultimately the world must be at peace of mind with itself. If we want to get to that stage of mind, we must try to train the mind by the meditation way. It is also like a pyramid; its various components within the levels must be strengthened.

In modern times, man is reaching out and seeking more and more sense stimulation. The popularity of the portable radio with or without earphones, and television is a clear indication of the present trend to seek for more and more stimulation. By all this, we have become alienated from ourselves; we do not know our real nature or the real nature of mind, to be more precise. Moreover, we go about our business in social life wearing masks appropriate for each occasion. We often do not show our true feelings of jealousy, greed, hatred, pride, or selfishness. We hide them in socially accepted ways of formalized verbal expressions such as congratulations, thank you, and deepest sympathies. But there are times when our negative emotions are so acute that they come into the open in the form of violence, stealing, quarreling, backbiting, and so forth. But generally, we try to keep these venomous snakes of negative emotions inhibited. When we are able to train the mind to attain peace and forgiveness through meditation, that means the contribution of meditation is to resolve the current problems of social life.

To sum up, I can say that *vipassanā* meditation stands as a timeless practice with profound implications for personal and societal well-being. By fostering self-awareness, ethical living, and resilience against modern challenges, meditation bridges the gap between individual transformation and collective harmony. In an era of rapid technological advancements and socio-political upheavals, embracing meditation as a universal practice can lead to a more mindful, compassionate, and peaceful world. *Vipassanā* meditation transcends religious boundaries to serve as a universal tool for personal growth and social ethics. By fostering self-discipline, mindfulness, and compassion, meditation contributes to individual well-being and societal harmony. As contemporary societies confront increasing stress and ethical crises, integrating *vipassanā* meditation into education, healthcare, and social policies can foster a more ethical and balanced world.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: BUDDHIST AND AYURVEDIC APPROACH

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Abstract:

With the advancement of technologies, human life has become self-centered, which ultimately reflects on social health. Nowadays, humans are moving away from spiritual practices and engaging in sensual pleasure, which results in disturbing their physical and mental status. Human ethics and moral values are in the regression stage. As individual health is damaging the societal state, eventually the nation and world peace is at stake. Hence, Buddha's philosophy is the need of the hour as the world is on the edge of a political and religious war. His ideology of *Ahimsā*, i.e., non-violence and *mettā* towards all living creatures, is required to avoid conflicts between the nations. Buddha was against war and in favor of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means by Arbitration. Impermanence (*Anicca*) is a rule of the universe. So, what is important is that if we concentrate on putting our minds at peace, then we can broadcast peace mentally and generate peace through our actions. We should use a peaceful mind to act for peace in the world. For inner peace and world peace, Buddha recommends meditation at the individual level. It helps in the cultivation of mind and body for inner peace. Meditation is instrumental in keeping one's mind at peace and a healthy body. These four noble truths unveil the secret of human life. It is based on the cause-and-effect theory, which is scientific and applicable everywhere. Sufferings can be reduced if people in their daily routine follow *Pañcasīla*, the Noble Eightfold Path, and ten *Pāramitā*. A series of incidents happened in Buddha's life, making him think of the exact root of pain in this world, and this quest paved the way to take him to the path of spirituality. The enlightened Buddha finds the solution with pure and scientific Dhamma to the world. His philosophy is based on Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity. To be at peace, Buddha recommends Meditation to conquer hatred, greediness, lust, and anger. So that an individual can lead his

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life peacefully. *Pañcasīla*, the Eightfold Path, and ten *pāramī* are the basics of his philosophy to lead a peaceful life. On the other hand, *Āyurveda*, the traditional healing system of India, for centuries focuses on preventive and curative aspects of diseases. For healing the physical ailments there needs to be healing of the mind first. Following the right diet as per the humor of the person, daily and seasonal routine, along with boosting the mind by following spiritual practices, brings the mind to a calm and composed stage which reflects in the surrounding environment and subsequently carries the world at peace.

Keywords: *Inner peace, meditation, āyurveda, world peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

World Peace with a satisfactory life is the goal of human beings. However, since known civilization, it reveals that there have been constant disputes and differences among human beings and States. The Buddha discovered four noble truths and showed the path of Dhamma for individual peace as well as peace in the Universe. The Buddhist teachings/ Dhamma are based on the law of nature hence, it is applicable everywhere.

The Buddhist approach is for peace of mind and compassion towards another living creature. It also focuses on the *Kamma*. Cause and Effect theory constantly reminds us of the outcomes or fruits of our actions. The Buddha's teaching is about respect for life and the prohibition against taking life. Therefore, advocates for observing *Karuna* (Compassion) and beyond that asked for *Mañtri*. *Karuṇā* includes love only for human beings, but *Mañtriis* love for all living beings.

In the modern period, after the First World War League of Nations was established to minimize and settle disputes among states. It failed to achieve the desired objective, resulting in the Second World War, which brought untold sorrow to human beings. Therefore, the United Nations was established to maintain international peace and security in the world. However, it seems that constant fights and struggles are going on at different levels.

Also, nowadays, it is been observed that humans are moving away from spiritual practices and engaging in sensual pleasure, which ultimately disturbs their physical and mental status. Hence, human ethics and moral values are in the regression stage. *Āyurveda* is the traditional healing system that promotes a healthy mind and body, which is important to obtain the *Nibbāna* stage. It is the traditional science that enforces primarily on preventive aspects of body and mind by following a healthy routine as per age, season, physical and mental strength, and humor of person.

Against this backdrop, it is pertinent to revisit the Buddhist approach to World Peace and the Ayurvedic concept of healthy living. In the present paper, the Researcher has discussed the Buddhist morality and approach toward inner peace and World Peace along with provisions for world peace under modern international law. Also, the various modalities of the Ayurved system help to avoid psychological diseases. For cultivating inner peace and world peace, the

teachings in *Dhammapada* are useful for humanity. In this regard, verse no.178 from *Dhammapada* is very noteworthy:

Better than sole sovereignty over the earth,/Or the journey to heaven,/Than lordship over all the worlds,/Is the fruit of Stream Attainment.¹

II. BUDDHIST APPROACH TO WORLD PEACE

Before the enlightenment of Buddha, it is pertinent to know about the ideology of Prince Siddhartha. Prince Siddhartha was born in the Shakya Clan. His father was ruling as a King from Kapilvastu. King provided him with all the comforts of life. However, it seems that since childhood Prince Siddhartha was compassionate towards people and other living creatures. The respect for life was well-rooted in his mind.

2.1. Prince Siddhartha's ideology of compassion and peace

As a *Kṣatriya*/ warrior prince, he taught all tactics of use of weapons and warfare, however, he never indulged himself in the luxurious hunting of animals. On the contrary, Siddhartha, being a compassionate person, always tried to save the lives of animals. He always refused to join hunting parties with friends on the reason that he did not like to see the killing of innocent animals. When mother, Prajāpati Gautamī, insists him saying, “You have forgotten that being a *Kṣatriya* you must fight and the art of fighting can be learned only through hunting; only by hunting you can learn how to aim accurately. Hunting is a training ground for the warrior class.” Siddhartha was not satisfied with the answer but asked a question: “How can it be the duty of man to kill man?” Moreover, if all *Kṣatriyas* loved one another, they would be able to protect their kingdom without resorting to killing.

The incident of Siddhartha's childhood showed his compassionate mind. Once, when Siddhartha was resting under a tree on his father's farm, a bird fell from the sky just in front of him. An arrow pierced its body that was shot. It was fluttering about in great agony. Siddhartha rushed to the help of the bird. He removed the arrow, dressed its wound, and gave it water to drink. He picked up the bird, returned to the palace where he was seated and wrapped up the bird in his upper garment and held it next to his chest to give it warmth. After a while, the bird completely recovered. Devadatta, his cousin, approached him and claimed the bird as he had shot it. Siddhartha refused to hand over the bird to Devadatta. A sharp argument ensued between the two. Devadatta argued that he was the owner of the bird because, as per the rules of the game, he who killed a game would become its owner. Siddhartha denied the validity of the rule. He argued that it was only he who had protected the right to claim the ownership, and a person who killed the game could not be the owner. Since neither party would yield, the matter was referred to arbitration. The arbitrator upheld the view point of Siddhartha.² The incident reveals that since childhood, he was

¹ The Dhammapada (2008). *Sayings of the Buddha*. Oxford World's Classics, p. 33.

² Dr. S. N. Busi. (2018). *Gautama Buddha – Life & Teachings*. Ava Publications, Hyderabad, p. 10.

compassionate. Killing in any form and situation was not acceptable to him. It paved the way for his ideology of *Ahimsā*, i.e., Non-Violence and *mettā* towards all living creatures.

Another incident took place when Siddhartha became a member of the Shakya Sangha after attaining the age of twenty. Buddha gave the way of settlement of disputes by Arbitration. After becoming a member of Shakya Sangha, there was a conflict between the states of Shakya and *Koliya* on the distribution of water from the river Rohini. The Senapati of Shakya intends to wage war against the *Koliya*. However, Gautama strongly opposed the resolution and said that war does not solve any question. Waging war will not serve the purpose, but it will sow the seeds of another war. Therefore, he suggests that Shakya and *Koliya* should ask to elect two men from them respectively, four members should elect a fifth person, and they should settle the dispute.³ It shows that even before his enlightenment, Buddha was against war and in favour of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means by Arbitration.

Siddhartha's proposal of Arbitration was not accepted; on the contrary, Senapati insisted he wage a war against *Koliya*. The proposal to wage war was moved by Senapati in the Sakya Sangha meeting, and it was passed with the majority. Thereafter, three options were given to Siddhartha, i.e, (1) to join the forces and participate in the war, (2) to consent to being hanged or exiled, and (3) to allow the members of his family to be condemned to a social boycott and confiscation of property.

Siddhartha was firm in not accepting the first option, the third was beyond his imagination, giving trouble to the family, so the second option was opted for him. It seems that even being Prince Siddhartha he was not in favor of war. He had chosen to leave the country in the interest of innocent people.

2.2. Buddha's ideology of compassion and peace

Buddha believes that everything in this world happens due to cause and reason. He denied the existence of God in the universe. Impermanence (*Annicca*) is a rule of the universe. So, his philosophy is based on scientific principles. As far as the behaviour of human beings is concerned, Buddha believes that man is behind all his sorrow. Man is responsible for his happiness and sorrow (*dukkha*). Hence, he prescribes ethical behaviour in the society, and that can be possible if man follows five precepts, eightfold path, and ten *Pāramitā* (moral principles). He said attachment or craving for materialistic things brings sorrow in life. 'World peace cannot be achieved in isolation from individual's peace. 'Buddhists believe that the minds of all living beings are interconnected and interrelated, whether they are consciously aware of it or not. To use a simple analogy for the interconnection, each being has his or her transmitting and receiving station and is constantly broadcasting to all others

³ Dr. Ambedkar, B. R. (1957). *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan, p. 24 - 25.

his or her state of mind and is constantly receiving broadcasts from all others.⁴ So what is important is, if we concentrate on putting our minds at peace, then we can broadcast peace mentally and generate peace through our actions. We should use a peaceful mind to act for peace in the world.

For inner peace and world peace, Buddha recommends meditation at the individual level. It helps to cultivate of mind and body for inner peace. Meditation is instrumental to keeping one's mind at peace and a healthy body.

In *Vipassanā* meditation, which was invented by Buddha, there is a practice to calm the mind by experiencing the sensation of the body, it is helpful for the inner peace of the individual. We realize in the *Vipassanā* meditation that everything is impermanent, like breathing through the nostrils. *Mettā* towards all living creatures generates compassion towards all and gives satisfaction. It is really helpful for inner peace and we can lose anger, hatred, etc ultimately driven towards world peace.

The Buddha insisted on following the path of "*Dhamma*" to maintain world peace. He taught the world about peace and Non-violence. He discovered the four noble truths (*Aryasatya*):

- (1) Life inevitably involves suffering (*Dukha Satya*),
- (2) Suffering originates in desires (*Samudaya Satya*),
- (3) Suffering will cease if all desires cease (*Nirodh Satya*),
- (4) Ceasing of desire is possible by engaging in the noble eight-fold path (*Margasatya*).

These four noble truths unveil the secret of human life. It is based on the cause-and-effect theory, which is scientific and applicable everywhere. Sufferings can be diminished if people in their daily routine follow *pañcasīla*.⁵

2.3. *Pañcasīla* for inner peace

Buddha prescribes the five precepts (*pañcasīla*) for living a harmonious life. It reminds everyone to behave sensibly in society. His teaching is about:

- (1) to abstain from taking life - *pānātipātā veramaṇī*
- (2) to abstain from taking what is not given - *adinnādānā veramaṇī*
- (3) to abstain from sensuous misconduct - *kāmesu micchā-cārā veramaṇī*
- (4) to abstain from false speech - *musāvādā veramaṇī*
- (5) to abstain from toxicants as tending to cloud the mind - *surā meraya*

⁴ Epstein, R. (1988, November 7 & 9). *Buddhist ideas for attaining world peace*. (lectures for the Global Peace Studies Program). San Francisco State University. Retrieved from: sfsu.edu/rone/Buddhism.

⁵ Nagarale, S. *Mindful Leadership for Sustainable Peace: A Buddhist Approach with Reference to U.N. Charter*, In Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu & Most Ven. Dr. Thich Duc Thien, *Mindful leadership for sustainable peace*. Hong Duc Publishing House, Vietnam Buddhist University Publications, p. 145.

majja pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī

If people follow these principles, then their lives will be peaceful, and ultimately entire society will be at peace. If we correlate these moral principles with today's legal system, we find that killing, stealing, toxication, abusing, etc., are punishable offenses.

Noble Eightfold Path: The Eightfold Path is provided by Buddha to live a good life by following ethical practices. The path is a pious one and teaches to bring equanimity in one's life. The followers of these principles can avoid human suffering and live in harmony. It will help to bring inner peace.

Right Views (free from superstition and delusion)

Right Aspirations (high and worthy of the intelligent, earnest man)

Right Speech (kind, open, truthful)

Right Conduct (peaceful, honest, pure)

Right Livelihood (bringing hurt or danger to no living thing)

Right Effort (in self-training and self-control)

Right Mindfulness (the active, watchful mind)

Right Repute (in deep meditation on the realities of life)

The pāramitās: The ten perfections in the Theravada tradition stated that these qualities of perfections lead towards Buddhahood. Therefore, paramitas are important to follow in everyone's life, these are (1) Generosity (*dāna*), (2) Morality (*sīla*), (3) Renunciation (*nekhamma*), (4) Insight (*pañña*), (5) Energy (*virīya*), (6) Patience (*khanti*), (7) Truthfulness (*sacca*), (8) Resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*), (9) Loving-kindness (*mettā*), and (10) Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

The above-mentioned principles are the basics of Buddhism. It will help to live healthy and in an ethical manner in society. If people started using these principles, it would bring peace into their lives. If individual's minds are at peace, then only, we can imagine peace in the society and the world at large. In this regard, the verse is very important, which means one should not commit any sin, should always do good work, and purify his mind.

Sabba paapassa akaranam,/kusalassa upasampadaa,/sachita pariyodapanam/etam buddhaana saasana. (Buddha Vaggo)

III. INTERNATIONAL LAW ON WORLD PEACE

UN Charter contains provisions about restricting and even prohibiting war by States.

(1) The Preamble of the Charter declares that 'armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest.

(2) Article 2(4) of the UN Charter states that all members of the U.N. shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations. Thus, instead of the word 'War', the Charter indicates

the words 'threat or use of force'. Herein Charter not only prohibits only war but the use of all kinds of force or threat thereof.

(3) Chapter VI provides certain methods for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. It includes negotiations, good offices, conciliation, judicial settlement, inquiry, or any other peaceful means of choice.

(4) Under Chapter VII, the Security Council is empowered to take collective action against the State, which has committed aggression or has otherwise committed a breach of international peace.⁶

The Preamble of the charter stated that, the United Nations determined - "to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind" and i) To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and ii) To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of International law can be maintained, and iii) To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and for these ends iv) To practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours and v) To ensure ,by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, armed force not be used, save in the common interest, and vi) To employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, has resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.⁷

General Assembly Resolution 2565 (xxv) of 1970 says that No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political, or any other type of measures to coerce another State to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its Sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind. Also, no State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another State, or interfere in civil strife in another State."

In the year 1971, there were violations of the Human Rights of the people of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan). It resulted in an influx of Bangladeshi people into India, which compelled India to take action against Pakistan. The influx of refugees endangered India's social and political life; therefore, India justified her action.

Thereafter, the Declaration on the Enhancement of the Effectiveness of the Principle of Refraining from the Threat or Use of Force in International Relations *was* adopted by the General Assembly on 18 November 1987.

IV. BUDDHIST APPROACH OF WORLD PEACE & INTERNATIONAL LAW

Prince Siddhartha was in search of answers for the sorrow of human life.

⁶ Dr. Kapoor, S. K. (2007). *International Law and Human Rights* (116th ed.). CLA, Allahabad, p. 709.

⁷ Haris, D. *Cases and Materials on International Law* (South Asian 7th ed.). Sweet & Maxwell, p.885.

The enlightened Buddha finds the solution to it. He gave pure and scientific Dhamma to the world. Buddha said, he is not providing any way for heaven but the standard code of conduct to live a peaceful life. His philosophy was based on Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity. To be at peace, Buddha recommends Meditation to conquer hatred, greediness, lust, and anger. So that, individual can lead his life peaceful. *Pañcasīla*, the Eightfold Path, and ten *Pāramī* are the basics of his philosophy to lead a peaceful life.

The Charter of the United Nations was established to maintain international peace in the world. To that end, it incorporated the philosophy of the protection of human rights, equality among men and women as well as among states. Settlement of disputes through peaceful manner. After a close look, it seems that these principles embodied in the Charter are relevant to the Buddhist basic principles.

Other international instruments are devoted to peace and humanity in the world. E.g. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, etc. However, in the present world, it seems that State Parties are not strictly adhering to the principles and provisions given under it.

V. AYURVEDA APPROACH TO INNER PEACE

Ayurveda, the ancient traditional healthcare system of India, has precisely stated the importance of mind through the definition of health that is “*Prasennaatmaindriyathe mana*,” which means your mind and sensory organs should be cheerful and delighted for a healthy being.⁸

The spiritual base of Ayurveda is the attainment of *Moksha* (Liberation) by following the steps of *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (Wealth), and *Kama* (pleasure) gradually. As per the theory of Ayurveda, worldly things have to be exposed first to realise the fruitlessness of it. So, after completing all the duties and responsibilities of family life one can find the spiritual prospects to find the *Nirwana* and ultimately for this purpose stability of body and mind is very important.

Mind is referred to as *Mana* or *Manas* in Ayurveda. *Manas* has its objects, which the mind experiences, since it is an autonomous *Indriya* (sense). Therefore, *Manas* has the capacity to experience its objects, such as anything that can be thought of, in addition to being able to perceive *Indriya Visaya* (sensory objects). *Manas*’s objects are: (1) *Chintya*: which is the subject of dos and don’ts, (2) *Vicharya*: which is the object of discrimination, reasoning, and logic, (3) *Uhya*: is the thing being judged or speculated, (4) *Dhyeya*: is the subject of constant contemplation regarding wanted goods, (5) *Sankalpa* is an imaginary thing that is evaluated for merit and demerit. *Manas* operates introspectively as well, independent of the sense organs.

Any knowledge gained through this method or emotions perceived by the mind also become the subject of thought.

⁸ Shashtri, P. R., et al. *Charak Sutrasthana* 8/1, Choukhambha Bharati, Varanasi.

The intellect of a living creature is also imbued with the qualities of *Trigunatva*, namely *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*, since living beings are microsomes of the macrosome or the cosmos. *Satvaguna* represents the *Ākāśa* (Sky element), *Rajas* represents *Vāyu* and *Teja* (Air and fire element), and *Tamas* represents *Prithivī* and *Jala* (Earth and water element). The three basic components of the mind are *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. The latter two are known as “*manas dosha*” (evil qualities), and they have the power to induce mental illnesses.

Mercy, sharing nature, endurance, honesty, good behaviour, faith in God, knowledge, intellect, learning capacity, memory, self-control, and selfless service are all aspects of *Sattvika*. *Rajasika*’s traits include excessive grief, a tendency to move, a lack of self-control, an exaggerated sense of self-worth, lying, cruelty, wickedness, pride, excitement, attachment, and anger. A depressed attitude, lack of faith in God, bad behavior, ignorance, crookedness, lethargy, and drowsiness are all signs of *Tamasika*. The *Rajas* and *Tamas* elements are responsible for unwholesome actions, while the *Satva* constituent is responsible for all the beneficial aspects of the mind. As the balance of all three elements of the mind solely depends upon the intellect of the person and the perversion of it results in poor decision-making and an inability to protect the mind from dangerous objects is known as *Prāṇāparādha*. In Ayurveda, a long list of elements under *Prajñāparādha* has been described.

Charaka has said unequivocally that a person’s mental illness is caused solely by his *Prajñāparādha*, even though numerous additional etiological variables are included under the etiological factors of *Mano Rogas*. The uninformed engage in unwholesome sensory enjoyment, suppress natural drives, expose themselves to stress beyond their capabilities, and adopt transient, pleasurable routines because of *Prajñāparādha*. However, the smart do not fall into it because of their clear perception. Following certain routines can make you unhappy for a while, but eventually, it will make you happy. After careful consideration and comprehension, the wise follow a wholesome regimen, whereas those lacking these attributes suffer from *Rajas* and *Tamas*, are tempted to engage in unwholesome activities, and eventually give in to temptation.

Sadvritta (Ethical Regimen): Ayurveda offers guidelines for keeping the mind in good condition. These are moral standards that apply to everyone, everywhere, and at any time. Putting them into practice helps the mind become balanced and harmonious. These are truthfulness, Under no circumstances should you lose your anger, Avoid developing a dependence on sensory pleasures, Don’t hurt anyone, Avoid putting yourself in difficult situations as much as you can, Make an effort to manage your emotions, Make an effort to use kind and pleasant language, For mental peace, practice meditation daily, Paying attention to everything being clean, Having patience, Be mindful of self-control, Make an effort to share information, wise counsel, and assistance with others.

If at all possible, dedicate your services to God, the wise, and old or respectable people.

- Be direct and courteous.
- Steer clear of erratic everyday activities.
- Steer clear of excessive eating, drinking, sex, and excessive or insufficient sleep.
- Act appropriately for the time and location in which you are living.
- Always behave in a kind and courteous way.
- Regulate your senses.
- Develop the habit of doing good deeds and refraining from evil deeds.

It is necessary to develop environments and living conditions that support mental health and enable people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles to prevent sickness and promote mental health. The essential components that are essential to achieving good mental health are the consumption of nutritious “*Āhāra*” by the guidelines and the precepts of “*Dinacharyā*” (Daily routine), “*Rtucaryā*” (Seasonal routine), “*Sadvṛtta*” (Good actions), and “*Ācāra Rasāyana*” (Mind boosting behaviour). Many individual medications and formulations for psychiatric disorders are described in Ayurveda. Here, the idea of *Dhātu-sāmyatā* (Balance of bodily elements) is equally pertinent. It is a state of *dhātu* balance, where *Dhātu* is an acronym for *Doṣa*, *Dhātu*, and *Mala*. It is also Ayurveda’s primary goal.

The following traits are listed under *Dhātusāmyatā* and include the balance of mental and physical health and could be regarded as subjective indicators of “*Vikāropaśamana*” (disease alleviation) Pain relief, a normal voice and complexion, a healthy body, increased strength, appetite during meals, proper food digestion, getting enough sleep and waking up without feeling tired, the absence of morbid dreams, the proper removal of flatus, urine, stool, and semen, mental, intellectual, and sensory impairments, and the absence of any diseases.

If the person is suffering from *Cintā* (overthinking), *Krodha* (Anger), *Dukhha* (Sadness), *Bhaya* (Fear), *Śoka* (Regrets), etc, then even the highly rich food is not digested properly, hence, there needs the balance of diet and mind.⁹

For a stable body, there needs to be a balanced diet and a peaceful mind. At the cellular level there needs the diet is needed for its survival, and the type of diet decides the physical health of a person. Hence, the state of the body depends upon the food one takes, and hence the food is considered as “*Annaperbrahma*” (Food is the highest life force) in Indian tradition. A healthy mind in a healthy body. But if the mind is balanced, then the body will be healthy.

In recent centuries, we encounter life-threatening diseases such as cancer, AIDS and heart diseases, psychosis, and epilepsy which entirely involves the mind as a causative factor primarily and then it covers the whole body.

A Psychosomatic disease, also known as psychophysiological disease, is essentially a disorder of stress. It is termed psychosomatic because the initial cause of such a disease centres on the psyche, and the manifestations

⁹ Charak Vimana Sthana, Adhyaya 2/12.

are somatic. For instance, peptic ulcer diathesis is initiated in the form of psychic stress that ultimately results in the formation of a stomach or duodenal ulcer, which is very much a somatic presentation. Besides peptic ulcer, the other important psychosomatic disorders are Ulcerative Colitis, Essential Hypertension, Ischaemic heart disease, Bronchial Asthma, Diabetes mellitus, and Rheumatoid Arthritis.¹⁰

Also, in mental disorders, various modalities of treatment such as making an effort for the stability of mind, healing the mind through meditation, and to live happy at any condition.¹¹ Various psychosomatic diseases are rooted in mental imbalance due to craving. All the mental ailments are relieved by the science behind the stability of mind, which is attained by practising meditation.¹²

Āyurveda treatment for mental illness depends on the cause, the involved *Dosha* (Mind and body), and the origin of the disorder. Achieving mental health involves following spiritual and scientific knowledge, cultivating patience and courage, improving memory, and practicing meditation. Overall, the mind and body are interconnected, and any somatic disorder can affect the mind, while any mental disorder can influence the body.¹³

All sensation of pain (psychic and somatic) ceases to exist in the state of Yoga (union with the self) or with various exercise regimens and *Moksha* (emancipation).¹⁴

The unwholesome conjunction of the sense organs with their objects (*Asatmendriyarthasanyoga*), intellectual blasphemy (*Pragyapradha*), and transformation (*Pariṇāma*) are three-fold causes of diseases (Psychic, somatic, and psychosomatic). Proper utilization of the objects, action and time is beneficial to the maintenance of normal health.¹⁵

In “*Ashtang Yoga*” of Acharya Patanjali, to purify the mind and increase awareness, *Maitri* (Sense of Friendship), *Karuṇā* (Compassion), and *Muditā* (Empathy) need to be practiced so that the mind becomes calm and composed.¹⁶

¹⁰ Ghildiyal, S., & Pandey, D. *Concept of Manas and Manovikara in Āyurveda*. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378528100>

¹¹ Lalchand Shashtri, V.P. *Ashtang Hriday Sutra* 1/26. Baidyanath Ayurved Bhavan, Nagpur.

¹² Lalchand Shashtri, V.P. *Ashtang Hriday Sutra* 1/26. Baidyanath Ayurved Bhavan, Nagpur.

¹³ Kuldeep, et al. (2023). *A Review of Mana and Manas Roga from Traditional Ayurvedic Literature*. *Journal Name*, 6 (4), 61 - 66.

¹⁴ Shastri, K., & Chaturvedi, G. (1989). *Vidyodini Hindi commentary* (16th). Chaukham-bha Bharati Academy. *Charak Sharira* 1/137, p.830.

¹⁵ Singh, A. K., Panda, R. K., Mishra, S. C., Singh, M., & Parida, A. N. (2016). *Psychosomatic disorders and its management through Ayurveda*. *International Journal of Bioassays*, 5(1), 4764 - 4767.

¹⁶ Patanjali. *Yoga Sutra*, Chapter 1, *Samadhi Pada* 1.33.

As the mind and body purification leads to a healthy individual, which will reciprocate the true nature of human beings, ultimately reflected in the form of a peaceful world.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Buddhist approach to world peace is clear from his Dhamma teachings and sermons. For him, humanity is important. Peace can be achieved if we follow the path of Dhamma. Peace can only be maintained if people follow the scientific dhamma. The neglected people of the society should be given due consideration and respect. In the era of Globalisation, the capitalist approach is accepted everywhere, but at the same time, there should not be a concentration of wealth in the hands. Therefore, the people should give *Dana* / Donation *parmita* suggested by Buddha.

Ayurveda treatment offers mental and spiritual well-being along with physical health that is important for every citizen of the country and, finally, for global well-being.

The Sustainable Development Goals, which are set by the United Nations, are also in accordance with the teachings of Buddha. The sooner we achieve it, it will be possible to build an egalitarian society in the world.

Moreover, disputes and differences between men and States need to be settled as per guidelines given by Buddha, i.e., by Arbitration and Negotiation. The Charter of the United Nations also specifically prescribes the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, i.e., Negotiation, Arbitration, Mediation, and Good Offices. If states follow it, we can avoid disputes and settle differences without any use of force or war.

In the present circumstances, wherein many states are fighting with each other on various issues, it is the need of the hour to rethink and revisit the Buddhist philosophy and Ayurveda lifestyle. It is not a religion for particular people but Buddha gave his dhamma for the entire humanity. Therefore, Buddhist teachings and philosophy are important to cultivate inner peace so that we can maintain world peace. The Prime Minister of India Late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru stated, “The ages roll by and Buddha seems not so far away after all; his voice whispers in our ears and tells us not to run away from the struggle but calm-eyed, to face it and to see in life ever greater opportunities for growth and advancement”.¹⁷

¹⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India, Centenary Edition, p.132

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THREE GENERATIONS OF BUDDHISTS IN A CATHOLIC COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA

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Abstract:

Peace is essential for achieving a fulfilling life. We illustrate this idea through various definitions from historical figures, interpreting them in a way that resonates with our understanding.

We explore the nature of peace through the life experiences of three generations of a Mexican Buddhist family. Recent events in our lives have required a shift in our behavioral patterns, guided by the teachings of the Buddha, thereby creating the necessary conditions to respond to unwholesome mental states. This has led us to analyze ourselves and develop a peaceful way of living. The result is a body of practical knowledge—an alternative path that can not only benefit us but also help those seeking a way toward a healthier, more conscious, and practical mindset. This approach does not require deep practice or excessive effort, only goodwill and perseverance.

Furthermore, we share some of our visions for fostering a cleaner and more sustainable community, one that nurtures better mindsets, greater attentiveness, wisdom, and clarity. We also highlight the reciprocal relationship between benevolent love and the willingness to be of service to society.

We conclude with the essence we have extracted from each event mentioned. This is not a finite set of information but rather a way of thinking and acting that, when applied correctly in any circumstance, can lead to better decision-making. It is a perspective rooted in the *Dhamma*.

From the depths of our hearts and with the best intentions, we hope this will be of benefit to the readers.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Mexico, Catholic country.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definitions

Inner peace can be defined as the capacity of individuals to attain a state of tranquility, acceptance, and emotional well-being. It is a harmonious, positive state, free from inner conflict and turmoil.

Many historical figures have defined peace in different ways: Mahatma Gandhi expressed the nature of peace not as a goal but as continuous work: "There is no path to peace; peace is the path." Similarly, Eleanor Roosevelt (American writer and activist) stated, "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it and work to achieve it."

Confucius (Chinese philosopher) observed that peace is generated within oneself: "If we are not at peace with ourselves, we cannot guide others in the quest for peace." In the same vein, Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Indian nun) said that peace and war can spread across different spheres and begin at home: "If we want peace in the world, let us start by loving one another within our own families."

Benito Juárez (Mexican president, 1858 – 1872) viewed peace as a type of respect for others: "Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace."¹

1.2. The nature of peace in human beings

People seem to have little interest in peace; only seeking it when overwhelmed by stress and anxiety. In contrast, many are more drawn to constant activity that offers excitement, distraction, or entertainment. At the core, they are bored, unclear about the purpose of their lives. They search for meaning but do so vaguely and without full awareness, hoping that something – anything – will bring them the happiness they crave, though it remains elusive.²

Not only does peace often seem boring to them, but even discussing existence or non-existence – essentially, the meaning of life – can feel impractical and offer no tangible material benefit. Reflecting on life's purpose frequently brings anguish, leading people to systematically avoid it. They also fail to recognize that they lack peace. It's only when their constant busyness manifests as stress and anxiety that they seek relaxation – even though, at times, they choose activities that are even more stressful and exhausting. A person I know often says, "The best day of vacation is the day we return home."

The absence of peace manifests as a source of illness in individuals. Compassion must be understood in its truest sense – not as pity born from a place of superiority, but as genuine accompaniment, where we truly feel the suffering of others. To simply endure others' pain without engaging with it is destructive, but to actively alleviate their suffering, to bring them peace – and perhaps even happiness – is

¹ "Entre los individuos, como entre las naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz".

² This illustrates the deep dissatisfaction that arises from a life lacking meaning – something we confront on a daily basis.

the true essence of compassion. However, to offer peace to others, one must first cultivate it within oneself.³

Peace in the world is frequently called for, but what kind of peace are we truly seeking? Typically, we refer to external peace - the kind needed when violence disrupts human coexistence, the most visible and immediately troubling form. Yet, we rarely consider the inner peace of individuals, the kind that demands introspection and, in turn, enables us to view the world through a clearer, more compassionate lens.

Thus, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive and unrestricted understanding of peace, recognizing it as a value that touches every dimension of human existence. Peace extends beyond the social realm, where justice rejects inequality and domination, instead advocating for reciprocity and mutual interaction. It is a dynamic, ongoing process that is intricately linked to development and the protection of human rights.

It becomes clear that any reference to peace is inherently directed toward human beings, both as the subjects and objects of everything we say about it. Numerous paths lead to inner peace, each offering a different approach. The Buddhist perspective, for example, identifies inner peace as the starting point for universal harmony. According to the Buddha, the phenomenal world is consumed by the flames of greed, hatred, and ignorance - root causes of human suffering.

Peace, on the other hand, is something that humans long for, both as a right and a duty. It is a quality nurtured within ourselves. Even if external violence and wars were to cease, true peace could never be attained unless it first reigns within. Communal peace, in turn, arises from a deeper wellspring within each individual. We are all responsible for whether it grows or weakens.

Human beings are the primary subjects of peace, and since peace is born within them, it is essential to understand the factors that influence whether the desire for peace can become a reality. Above all, the individual's attitude serves as the first step in cultivating inner peace, a process that is often hindered by various obstacles.

Attitudes toward violence or peace are shaped by various factors and, while they can be changed, this process is not without its challenges. Therefore, education plays a crucial role in this transformation. Furthermore, building peace - shifting from a culture of violence to a culture of peace - can only be achieved through education.

Fostering a critical mindset and learning to discern issues clearly through thoughtful reflection are essential tools for cultivating positive attitudes toward peace. These tools empower individuals through self-esteem, open-mindedness, effort, values, and knowledge.

Peace has long been a fundamental concern of humankind. It is not something new to be discovered, but rather something to be approached in a

³ Bustamante, J. J. (2004). El despertar y la felicidad en el budismo. *Polis. Revista Latinoamericana*, 8, Article 8. <https://journals.openedition.org/polis/5959>

new way, as the Latin adage reminds us: “*non nova, sed nove*” (not new, but new). And, like so many other challenges, this begins with the individual and their inner self. Engaging in reflection, fostering a spirit of coexistence, and respecting the cultural, social, and ecological environment are all essential steps toward peace - an undertaking that is both inevitable and necessary. A strong belief in and confidence in the possibility of peace are crucial, for despite the challenges, it remains achievable - if only we are willing to embark on the journey.

“A path undoubtedly fraught with challenges, yet one that can be successfully navigated with knowledge, determination, and motivation - always remembering that peace begins within oneself.”⁴

1.3. Justification

In today’s world, where wars, famine, social and economic inequalities, the overexploitation of resources, and alienation from ourselves are prevalent, the emergence of motivations grounded in new perceptions - such as the detachment from false views, empathy, and compassion for all beings - could serve as the conditions necessary to transform the human essence, both on a personal and collective level. These shifts represent the crucial changes required for society to evolve toward a peaceful future.

For this reason, the exploration of oneself and others is crucial in shaping the mindsets needed to bring about this utopia. For Mexicans like us, the lessons drawn from our experiences must be shared to foster a cycle of reflection, learning, and the application of both social and personal wisdom.

We believe this point is essential for inspiring change in people, but it must come from the understanding that we are all beings in search of happiness, with an emphasis on empathizing and placing ourselves in the shoes of others.

This emphasizes the significance of fostering small acts of compassion, positivity, and joy - interventions that can deeply influence individuals. By embracing these positive actions, we can spark a ripple effect⁵, enhancing the collective sense of well-being and playing a vital role in building a more peaceful society.

II. SIGNIFICANT STORIES AND THE LESSONS WE LEARNED

2.1. Lourdes: Meeting venerable Ajahn Tong Sirimangalo

At 8 years old, it’s common in my country for Catholic children to make their First Communion, and I was no exception. One afternoon during catechism, as we prepared for our First Communion, a nun leading the session asked, “Why should we have God in our hearts?”

At that moment, I looked toward the trees surrounding the monastery and saw a light between them that made me feel at peace. Then, I had the answer: “To have more grace.”

⁴ Bouché Peris, J. H. (2003). La paz comienza por uno mismo. *Educación XX1*, 6(0). <https://doi.org/10.5944/educxx1.6.0.351>

⁵ Refer to 3.2.

As my life went on, thoughts of doubt about the purpose of life began to develop in my mind. I couldn't accept that life's purpose was simply to be born, grow, reproduce, and die- there had to be something more. Moreover, the idea that we are the center of the universe and that we are all that matters began to lose meaning as I grew older.

Nineteen years later, my sister Marcela invited me to meet the Venerable Ajahn Tong Sirimangalo, a prominent Thai monk. The moment I saw him and listened to his teachings, I felt the same sense of calm and peace I had experienced in my childhood years. From that moment on, I decided - along with my parents, who were already practicing Buddhism - to follow Buddha's teachings.⁶

2.2. Anwar: The end of the angry era

After hearing Lourdes' story, I realized that these experiences contain meaning and a lesson: "Peace exists in all religions and people - it is universal. In Buddhism, through meditation, I have achieved states of peace I haven't reached by other means."⁷

This led me to reflect that a correct and compassionate way of life can spread among people with physical and ideological differences, creating a peaceful and unifying sense for all beings.

When I was compelled to take action to improve my family's situation, I understood this truth and realized that peace could be created through goodwill, through the decision to sacrifice something personal - like ego - to save a relationship.

In this way, I transitioned from being a burden, an obstacle, and a source of annoyance, to choosing to detach from my preconceived notions, feelings of rejection, inadequacy, and loneliness. This allowed me to build healthy, constructive relationships with purpose.⁸

It has been said that one should neither cling to nor reject obstacles like anger but instead observe them.⁹ However, I discovered that identifying the type of mindset one aspires to, can serve as a great guide to initiating personal change and inspiring those around us.

During one of my most irate phases, I generated aversion toward almost everything, and my solution was to block external stimuli with what I called "instant peace," which were just earplugs. This stage ended when I realized that my belief that all actions by others were addressed to me, was merely a coincidence or a creation of my mind.¹⁰ When I became aware of this and

⁶ Theravada's Buddhism specifically.

⁷ *Vipassanā* practice.

⁸ These need to be an external and internal change that starts constructing from any of both, but could not be separated.

⁹ Ajahn Sucitto. (2017). *Introducción a la Meditación del Conocimiento Directo (Insight/Vipassanā)*. Amaravati Publications.

¹⁰ Everything is impersonal.

decoupled those notions and the resulting emotions, I stopped feeling anger toward such stimuli.

“Monks, all wholesome states, all that is part of what is wholesome, have the mind as their precursor. The mind arises first and is followed by wholesome states”.¹¹

2.3. Lourdes: Keeping calm after the bite

Many years ago, I went to pick up one of my children from daycare. He was about 8 months old. When I arrived, the receptionist, whose job was to hand over the children, said firmly, “Your son bit another child today”.

Just as she finished speaking, I saw a woman approaching quickly from afar, looking very angry. As soon as she saw me, she began yelling, saying that my son had bitten hers and that she was furious with me. She asked what kind of mother I was to allow an 8-month-old to bite another child.

I stood silent for a moment, listening to her. Then, all I could think of saying was for her to calm down - but it was in vain. Five minutes later, after she had tired herself out from yelling, she threatened to request my son’s expulsion from the daycare, grabbed her things, and left.

That afternoon, I reflected on what had happened. I decided to speak with her again and we talked for about 30 minutes. I told her I understood her, but this was just part of life with children. She thanked me for my understanding and for not causing a scene.

By observing and reflecting on her circumstances and being empathetic, I was able to avoid falling into a similar state, which also ceased her anger and created a peaceful environment.

In the story of “The King and the Soothsayer”, Argentine psychologist Jorge Bucay suggests, “Inner peace is not a calm and tranquil landscape; it is navigating mental and worldly chaos with observation, acceptance, and tranquility”.

To achieve inner peace, one must consciously observe and know oneself. Meditation serves as a tool for this purpose - a process of introspection that gradually provides tranquility and calms the mind. It allows one to see reality as it is, diminishing erroneous perceptions and neutralizing unwholesome mental states.

“Monks, I know of no such thing as diligence for the arising of beneficial states that have not yet arisen, nor for the vanishing of harmful states that have arisen”.¹²

2.4. Lourdes: Channeling to a state of peace

One day, I was on the street and saw my eldest son crying desperately about something. He was kicking and screaming, and his caregiver didn’t know what to do. Then I watched as my mother approached him, hugged him, and,

¹¹ *Āṅguttara Nikāya: Discursos del Buda*. Buda & Nyanaponika. (1999). Edaf.

¹² *Āṅguttara Nikāya: Discursos del Buda*. Buda & Nyanaponika. (1999). Edaf.

without knowing what was wrong, gently stroked his back and whispered in his ear to acknowledge what he was feeling.¹³ Gradually, he calmed down as he listened to her words.

We all have the incredible ability to adapt, learn and change. However, when faced with difficulties or stressful situations, it is common for our mind to react with anxiety, anger or frustration, which is why a proper guidance and intention can transform an altered state into a peaceful one in the present moment.

Peace of mind not only improves our quality of life, but also allows us to face challenges with greater clarity and resilience.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The nature of the mind

“The mind (*citta*) is essentially an activity or process of cognition or knowledge of an object. It is not an agent or instrument that has a real existence in itself apart from the activity of cognition... Buddhist thinkers point out, through these definitions, that it is not a permanent entity that acts on cognition but rather *citta* or consciousness. This consciousness is nothing other than the action of cognition, and this action is necessarily impermanent, characterized by arising and ceasing.”¹⁴

That is why it is said that the mind is in constant movement and never stops; It is a succession of consciousnesses that arise and cease one after another.

Peace is not a fixed quality. Peace is only peace when it is practiced first within ourselves and then toward other sentient beings. It is not a singular quality but a collection of states, rooted in empathy for others.

Due to the impermanent nature of the mind, it is difficult to maintain peaceful states consistently. We must make a great effort to sustain them for longer periods and to evoke tranquility and empathy at the right moment.

The mind can act in ways that require intelligence - that is, it pushes us into sequences of states often generated by our habits. Therefore, shifting to peaceful habits requires mindful awareness of how our mind reacts to certain circumstances. This is one of the objectives of mindfulness meditation¹⁵: by observing the mind, we come to understand its characteristics, accept the conditions created by it, and eventually enact behavioral changes by identifying the roots of our unwholesome states and understanding their causes and origins.

¹³ This is highly recommended by the teaching, to observe without intervention and make consciousness that everything is impermanent.

¹⁴ Anuruddha. Translated by Bhikkhu Nandisena. (2020). *Compendio del Abhidhamma, El Abhidhammattha-Sangaha de Anuruddha*. Instituto de Estudios Budistas Hispano. pp. 23.

¹⁵ “To realize of the functioning of the mind, and give clarity and mildness to the mind” Ajahn Sucitto. (2017). *Introducción a la Meditación del Conocimiento Directo (Insight/Vipassana)*. Amaravati Publications.

One must experience something rewarding to generate a sense of value that communicates to both the physical body and the mind that the effort is worthwhile. This added value can help spread peaceful states within and among communities. Since everyone desires well-being, offering a pleasant state is seen as positive and attractive, generating the willingness necessary for change - providing a state to aspire to.

A predilection for healthy states leads to more healthy states. Those who have experienced the fruits of good actions and positive states are more likely to cultivate similar states.

Memory is another significant factor in this process. It can remind us of the positive states we've experienced in our lives. If one knows that such states exist, they are more likely to strive for them. However, memory is often confined to current mental states.¹⁶ In other words, the memories that arise are influenced by the type of mental state one is currently in. This means that someone being in an unwholesome state will find it difficult to recall ever being in a different type of state.¹⁷

Thus, teaching oneself that one is not confined to the experiences of their current state – but that these are merely a fraction of all the possibilities that lie beyond what can currently be conceived – leads to the understanding that one should aspire to what generates positive states for both oneself and those around them.

3.2. Relationship between inner peace and collective peace

Buddha's teachings state that one of the main pillars for achieving both inner and collective peace is to follow a predefined ethical framework.¹⁸ Therefore, if one wishes to improve one's mental states, one must first improve ethically. The ethics one adheres to, determines how likely certain events are to occur in their social interactions. This demonstrates the potential correlation between mental states, quality of life, and the health of collective relationships.

One can easily see this by observing individuals or groups with cultivated mental states, such as monks or positive people: Being in their presence can influence one's state of mind. This bridge between the personal and the communal is often referred to as empathy.

Understanding the feedback mechanism that is created between the states of mind and the reaction of the environment, can facilitate diagnosing a situation and provide insights into how to improve it. For this reason, such reasoning should be distributed as a secular tool in society.

Inner peace has been depicted in many cultures, religions, societies, and

¹⁶ *Sati* or "mindfulness" has the effect of remembering the present, and the function of protecting the mind.

¹⁷ This might be an hypothesis of the cause for the prolonged chain of reborns in which beings get stuck in infernal existences, or long lifespan of the celestial planes.

¹⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi. (2001) *El Bien, La Belleza Y La Verdad*. Buddhist Publication Society Inc.(BPS).

eras. This is why it is considered a way of being that has helped humanity flourish.¹⁹

Although world peace and inner peace are different concepts, they are deeply interconnected. The development of one can serve as fertile ground for the other. Individuals with inner peace are key actors in fostering a more peaceful world, while a peaceful and fair environment provides the necessary context for people to find their inner balance. “One may conquer a million men in battle, but one who conquers oneself is the supreme conqueror.”²⁰

3.3. Methods

It is suggested that inner peace consists of three dimensions: acceptance of loss, transcendence of hedonism and materialism, and inner balance and calmness.²¹ For this we have compiled the following methods:

3.3.1. Benevolent love

All beings, even the smallest, desire life and well-being. Cultivating a benevolent heart toward all is a path to peace. By practicing *mettā* (benevolent love), one also improves the handling of ill will, which is one of the impediments to generating *sati* (mindfulness), whose function is to protect the mind.

In the basket of *suttas*, the *Mettā-Sutta* mentions this passage: “Just as a mother would protect her only child/ Even at the risk of her own life, so should one cultivate a boundless heart toward all beings.”²²

Benevolent love generates peace by promoting an attitude of care, empathy, and compassion toward oneself and others. This type of love, characterized by wishing for the well-being of others without expecting anything in return, creates an atmosphere of harmony and mutual understanding.

3.3.2. Mindfulness development

Argentine psychologist Nilda Chiaraviglio asserts: “We are beings in process.” She emphasizes that it is possible to pause before every decision, observe oneself, and connect with one’s mental processes. Being able to pause before making decisions and observe oneself to calm the mind is fundamental, and the more it is practiced, the closer one gets to a culture of inner peace and, therefore, collective peace.

¹⁹ Lee, M. T., Kubzansky, L. D., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2021). *Measuring Well-being: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from the Social Sciences and the Humanities*. Oxford University Press. pp. 435.

²⁰ *Dhp: Enseñanzas del Buddha: traducción del pali al español incluyendo el antiguo comentario de los versos por Buddhaghosa* (Nandisena, Trans.; Primera edición). (2008): “Yo sahaṣsaṃ sahaṣṣena/ saṅgāme mānuse jine; ekañ ca yeyya-m-attānaṃ, sa ve saṅgāmajuttamo”.

²¹ Lee, M. T., Kubzansky, L. D., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2021). *Measuring Well-being: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from the Social Sciences and the Humanities*. Oxford University Press. pp. 435

²² *Mettā-Sutta* from: U Silananda S. (1995) Parita pali A Collection of Eleven Protective Suttas. Dhammananda Vihara: “Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttā āyusā/ ekaputtamanurakkhe;/Evam pi sabbabhūtesu,/mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ.

It has been proven that mindfulness can help develop and enhance a peaceful state of mind.²³ The practice of mindfulness can develop this ability, as it generates mental tranquility, clarity, healthy mental states, and wisdom. Integrating this practice into daily life is a challenge to aspire to, but it can also be considered a valuable resource for difficult situations. It has already been applied as a secular practice that supports improvements in many fields.²⁴

According to Gueshe Kelsang Gyatso:

Meditation is to familiarize the mind constantly and deeply with a virtuous object. Through it, we can overcome internal problems such as hatred, jealousy, attachment, and ignorance. We can also control our mind, thus achieving great inner peace. Meditation enables us to cultivate virtuous intentions that lead us to create good actions and eliminate unwholesome intentions that cause us to commit harmful acts.²⁵

3.3.3. Purifying our environment

The activities that are realized and the people with whom we interact and who are close to us, are factors that lead towards corresponding types of mentalities, so an adequate environment and routines, and the change of these, can generate peaceful states: Sometimes when one is obfuscated, by changing the environment, one can change oneself, so things and people are also an intrinsic part of one's mind.

Just as the *Mangala-Sutta* says: "Not to associate with fools" "to associate with wise ones"... "To live in a suitable place"... "To have a job that does not confuse"... "That is the greatest blessing."²⁶

IV. PROPOSALS

The following proposals are not magic solutions, but they represent innovative and collaborative steps towards a more just, peaceful and sustainable future. The key is collective action and the political will to integrate these ideas coherently. To achieve global peace and sustainability, we not only need advanced technology, but also a profound change in our ways of living and interacting with the world.

4.1. A sustainable city for peace

Sustainable development is a way of life that provides the necessary conditions to ensure that the needs of humans and future generations are met

²³ Liu, X., Xu, W., Wang, Y., Williams, J. M. G., Geng, Y., Zhang, Q., & Liu, X. (2015). Can Inner Peace be Improved by Mindfulness Training: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Stress and Health*, 31(3), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2551>

²⁴ In the *DhammaVihara*, México, it is promoted to carry the practice integrating it into everyday life, anywhere one goes.

²⁵ Gueshe Kelsang Gyatso. (2014). *El camino gozoso de buena fortuna*. Editorial Tharpa México. pp. 97

²⁶ Mangala Sutta from: U Silananda S. (1995) *Parita pali A Collection of Eleven Protective Suttas*. Dhammananda Vihara.

without harming the environment.

Social sustainability and inner peace are concepts that, although often discussed separately, are deeply connected. Both reflect a vision of human well-being, both individually and collectively.

Social sustainability and inner peace are not two separate goals, but rather interdependent elements of a comprehensive approach to human well-being. By building a more equitable and respectful society, the path to internal peace for its members is facilitated. In turn, individuals who cultivate inner peace are more likely to contribute to the creation of a harmonious and just social environment. Therefore, working towards social sustainability not only involves addressing economic or environmental inequalities, but also fostering emotional and spiritual development that allows people to live at peace with themselves and others.

There are two ways in which sustainable development relates to peace. The first is that if the needs of the population are not met, this results in unwholesome mental states, which could exacerbate disputes. The 2030 Agenda, a commitment made by United Nations member countries in 2015, outlines 17 goals for global society to achieve – socially, economically (such as ending poverty and hunger), environmentally, organizationally, educationally, energetically, and in terms of equality – to change how we live and ensure the needs of this and future generations are met, which is considered an act of collective peace.²⁷

On the other hand, sustainable development can be approached from a personal and mental perspective. How can we improve personally in a way that is responsible toward our environment, while being functional, empathetic, and natural, and generating knowledge that can improve current quality of life and provide a starting point for future societies? In this case, inner peace reflects a structured personal framework, with proper priorities, ethical actions, the development of mental faculties, and the cultivation of benevolent love.

These two perspectives influence each other, connecting the inner world with the environment, society, and plurality, serving as forces that feedback into every social group.

A socially sustainable approach improves people's quality of life, helping the mind relax and transforming daily life. More green spaces, sustainable food for everyone – working together to foster harmony among people and protect our planet – is the work of both individuals and the collective, because peace begins within oneself.

Community dissemination can drive new behaviors, making it a fundamental resource for collective change. For this to be accepted by people,

²⁷ *La Asamblea General adopta la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible—Desarrollo Sostenible.* (2015). Retrieved January 30, 2025, from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/2015/09/la-asamblea-general-adopta-la-agenda-2030-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible/>

the message must be clear, concise, and attractive, as well as secular, with a coherent, friendly, and goodwill-driven image.²⁸

A culture of peace must be taught from childhood – in families, schools, and through the media.²⁹ A culture of prevention must be strengthened, reiterated, and applied repeatedly.

Just as Mexico City has taught its residents to separate trash, avoid using plastic bags, and take five-minute showers, similar collective sustainability initiatives should be applied to promote respectful, kind, and service-oriented interactions in all circumstances of daily life.³⁰

A green space in every neighborhood of Mexico City, resembling an oasis, where people can simply think and work as a community – cleaning, pruning, and planting purely for the joy of being at peace with oneself and others – could be an initiative to care for and value our living spaces, fostering harmony and better habits and environments, while creating conditions for peaceful development.

Related initiatives could be to: Restore local ecosystems, foster collaboration among diverse groups, and programs providing access to clean energy in vulnerable communities as an incentive for cooperation.

4.2. Mindfulness as part of the global idiosyncrasy³¹

An example of this is the Montessori education system, which makes students conscious of their actions and emphasizes responsibility for their effects. For instance, moving a chair in two different ways can have different impacts on oneself and others due to the noise or impression caused. It's no coincidence that attention to detail is a quality admired in many parts of the world and throughout history.

Attention is not the property of any nation; it is part of human capabilities and can be developed by anyone who meets the requirements.³² For this reason, building a culture where attention is cultivated and valued from childhood would lead to new collective perspectives, increased clarity and general wisdom, and the emergence of wholesome mental states, resulting in a healthier and more peaceful society.

That attention should be considered as an element of well-being and a measure of mental health – not just a mental health component – it would improve global living conditions. But progress begins with oneself, and personal obstacles to attention must first be overcome.

²⁸ Graphic designers must adopt these practices to disseminate the correct messages in an adequate manner, instead of appealing to sensationalism instincts.

²⁹ This initiative is growing into society, that's why I think that this epoch is the closest we have ever been to peaceful environments and interactions, and this tendency will increase in the future.

³⁰ Outer and inner development into a sustainable life.

³¹ *Sati* inside the global culture, habits and way of living.

³² According to Bhikkhu Nandisena from the fundamentals of attention discourse, one needs to work on other factors of oneself that blocks the development of *Sati*.

4.3. The spirit of service and benevolent love

Being helpful in your community is a powerful way to contribute to everyone's well-being. Every small gesture counts and can have a significant impact. By helping others, you are not only improving their lives but also enriching your own. Kindness and mutual support are fundamental for building strong, resilient communities.

Benevolent love and being of service are deeply interconnected, as both revolve around caring for and supporting others.

Benevolent love is based on the genuine desire to see others happy and well. This motivation drives people to be of service, as the desire to help others arises from a place of compassion and empathy.

Benevolent love and being of service contribute to the general well-being of the community. When people act with love and strive to help others, a more supportive and harmonious environment is created. This benefits not only individuals but also strengthens the fabric of society.

In summary, benevolent love and the will of service are intrinsically related. Both focus on the well-being of others and the creation of a more compassionate and supportive world. By cultivating benevolent love in our lives, we naturally become more service-oriented, and by serving others, we express and strengthen that love.

V. CONCLUSIONS

- (1) Peace is universal and can be present in everyone.³³
- (2) Goodwill is a starting point for creating peace.³⁴
- (3) Proper internal and external guidance can be highly beneficial.³⁵
- (4) Personal conceptions and mindset influence the mental states that arise.³⁶
- (5) Diligence in observation and reflection is a precursor to peaceful mental states.³⁷
- (6) Meditating on ultimate realities, such as the nature of the mind, helps generate peace.³⁸
- (7) Ethics are a prerequisite for leading a peaceful life both with oneself and with others.³⁹
- (8) Inducing peace in society starts with oneself, as both are

³³ Refer to 2.2

³⁴ Refer to 2.2

³⁵ Refer to 2.2 and 2.4

³⁶ Refer to 2.2

³⁷ Refer to 2.3

³⁸ Refer to 2.3, 2.4, 3.1

³⁹ Refer to 3.2

interconnected.⁴⁰

(9) The practice of metta is fundamental in creating kindness and peace.⁴¹

(10) Mindfulness maintains the mind in healthy states, thereby helping generate and sustain peace.⁴²

(11) Environmental degradation, such as resource scarcity, can generate conflicts between communities. Therefore, promoting sustainability is essential to maintaining peace.⁴³

(12) When communities have equitable access to sustainable resources, peace is more likely to be maintained.⁴⁴

(13) Promoting sustainability education makes societies more just and peaceful.⁴⁵

(14) Environmental problems, such as climate change, require international cooperation, which strengthens peace between nations.⁴⁶

Choosing peace does not require a complicated rationale. Sometimes, it is enough to choose peace simply because the world is already burdened with haste, anger, and division. Because peace, much like love, multiplies when shared. Because peace leads to lasting, sustainable outcomes. And, ultimately, because living peacefully enables us to thrive—not only for our well-being but also for the benefit of those around us.

May all beings residing on Earth, without exception, soon unite in a compassionate embrace so that they may finally find peace in their hearts and tranquility in their minds. In this way, the dream of world peace will become an imminent reality.

Jhānavari and Jāgara

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our teacher, Venerable Nandisena, for his clear and consistently accurate teachings. His guidance has been instrumental in helping us stay on the path of the Dhamma, to Alina Morales, friend in the Dhamma, for her accurate observations for this writing and her friendship of so many years. *Sādhu, sādhu, sādhu.*

⁴⁰ Refer to 3.2

⁴¹ Refer to 3.3.1, 4.3

⁴² Refer to 3.1, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 4.2

⁴³ Refer to 4.1

⁴⁴ Refer to 4.1

⁴⁵ Refer to 4.1

⁴⁶ Refer to 4

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INNER PEACE AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE WORLD PEACE: BRIDGING PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION AND GLOBAL CHANGE

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Abstract:

At present, the world has deprived its peace due to multifarious matters. Although the matters arisen seem to be new, the roots for them are the same as the time of the Buddha. They are initially identified on a personal level and next on a social level. The present scholars striving to settle these matters would find the fundamental teachings of the Buddha could be adopted in both these levels in the contemporary world, too. Primarily, the roots of the defilements within the personal are *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger), and *moha* (delusion).¹ The indispensable cause of these roots is *avijja* (ignorance).² These have not been changed for centuries or millennia. Further, these are inner psychological aspects of a person. As per Buddhism mind is the forerunner of all entities.³ About the personal matters as well as the social matters, This could be applied as a universal and everlasting truth. In the contemporary era of increasing global conflict and socio-political polarization, the Buddhist principle of cultivating inner peace emerges as a transformative solution to achieving sustainable world peace, based on the above idealistic move in Buddhist thought. This paper examines the foundational role of inner peace in addressing contemporary challenges to global harmony. Drawing upon Buddhist teachings and their practical applications, it explores how personal transformation fosters collective peacebuilding, bridging the gap between individual tranquility and global change. By integrating mindfulness, ethical

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¹ Bodhi (1998): 08.

² Ibid.

³ Dhammapada (1985): 23.

living, and compassion into societal frameworks, this study demonstrates the profound potential of inner peace as a catalyst for sustainable world peace.

Keywords: *Inner peace, world peace, buddhism, sustainable, psychology.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As a timeless and boundless issue, the quest for world peace has been a perennial aspiration of humankind. Despite significant advancements in technology and globalization, humanity continues to grapple with escalating conflicts, environmental crises, and widespread inequality. Though the socio-economic and political matters have changed, the issues related to global peace are not settled. Only the appearance of the issues has transformed with their surface structure conditions, while their conditions in the deep structure – greed, aversion, and delusion remain unchanged. The doctrine of the Buddha, with its emphasis on the interdependence of all phenomena in the world and the transformative power of mindfulness and compassion, offers a pathway to address these challenges. This paper delves into the Buddhist perspective on inner peace and its pivotal role in fostering sustainable world peace. It assures that personal transformation, through the cultivation of mindfulness and ethical living, can ripple outward to effect profound global change.

1.1. Methodology

This research has been completed initially as library research, giving priority to the primary sources. Primary religious texts related to early Buddhist thought are analyzed alongside secondary sources from contemporary scholarship while paying attention to the current practical Buddhist attempts to establish peace in communities. This approach provides insights into traditional and modern perspectives on the role of Buddhist teachings in fostering world peace in the modern era, too.

1.2. Literature review and research gap

It is obvious that the teachings of the Buddha have been identified by modern scholars as precious gems leading to peace within and world peace. Most of them identify the Buddhist teachings in political, social, and economic aspects as conducive to establishing peace in the globe. Yet, the study should be rendered primarily considering the mind as the sole principle of whole phenomena.⁴ Hence, giving priority to the mind is practical in peace building, too. When peace is developed within, it will manifest in the society, and that will be a universal move eventually. This aspect of Buddhist teachings is emphasized, which is less attended by the scholars, and consequently, the essence of Buddhism has not been spread in the globe, paving the way for peace within communities as well as amongst the communities.

II. AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The primary aim of this study is to highlight the essentials of Buddhism

⁴ Ibid.

related to inner peace, which lead to perfect peace with ultimate satisfaction, Nibbāna.⁵ Meanwhile, the objectives of the research are to highlight the mechanism of inner peace as per the Buddhist fundamentals with causal analyses and to guide the individual and society to establish global peace, encompassing mind mind-centered⁶ teachings of the Buddha.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1. The Buddhist concept of inner peace

Inner peace, according to Buddhist teachings, is the state of mental and emotional equilibrium achieved through mindfulness, meditation, and ethical conduct. To practice mindfulness, one should free oneself from the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) - sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and skeptical doubt, which obstruct mindfulness and spiritual progress.⁷ Particularly, the Dhammapada emphasizes that “Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a law eternal” (*Dhammapada* 5).⁸ This highlights the necessity of cultivating loving kindness against hate. If not, inner calm, the foundation for peaceful coexistence, cannot be established.

Further, the Buddha’s discourse in the *Metta Sutta* (*Sn* 1.8) underscores the significance of loving-kindness as a practice to achieve inner peace. It states: “May all beings be happy and secure; may they be happy-minded. Whatever living beings there may be... let none deceive another, nor despise any being in any state. Let none through anger or ill-will wish harm upon another.”⁹ This universal goodwill, cultivated through the practice of mettā (loving-kindness), lays the groundwork for personal harmony, then it will then be spread within the family and lead to interpersonal harmony throughout the whole society regardless of racial or national varieties.

Inner peace is not an isolated state but a dynamic process involving the cessation of mental defilements such as anger, greed, and delusion. Practices like mindfulness meditation (*Satipaṭṭhāna*) enable individuals to develop awareness and equanimity, fostering a compassionate outlook toward others. Such internal practices are the seeds for external peace, as individuals who embody tranquility are less likely to engage in conflict and more inclined to promote harmony. Hence, one who has no internal peace cannot be expected to assure peace in the society.

Buddhist teachings on peace are central to the religion’s philosophy and practice. Peace in Buddhism encompasses both inner tranquility and outer harmony. Here are some key aspects of Buddhist teachings on peace beginning from inside.

⁵ *Dhammapada* (1985): 54.

⁶ Chittena niyati loko chittena parikassati, Chittassa ekadhammassa sabbeva vasaman-vagūti *Samyutta Nikāya* (1884): 39.

⁷ *Nyanaponika* (1993) : 4.

⁸ *ibid.* 22.

⁹ *Sutta Nipāta* (2001): 66 – 67.

3.1.1. Inner peace

There is, in Christian belief and most notably in mystic traditions and in the teachings of Christ himself, a sense of the presence of God within. New Testament scripture, i.e., “The Kingdom of God is within you”, asserts that one may experience the presence of God within the hearts and minds of believers. Every human being possesses the Holy Spirit, in the Christians’ belief, which inspires and encourages everyone to have an individual relationship with God. The same type of concepts can be identified in Indian and Middle Eastern traditions, too. Parallely, the Buddha taught that true peace begins within oneself. He has emphasized that the world related to man is within oneself. In Rohitassa sutta (*Samyuttanikāya* 2.26), the Buddha assures the world related to the entire human existence is within the fathom-long body itself as,

Api ca khvāhaṃ, āvuso, imasmiṃyeva byāmamatte kaḷevare saññimhi samanake lokaṇca paññapemi, lokasamudayaṇca lokanirodhaṇca lokanirodhagāminiṇca paṭipadaṃ.

(For it is in this fathom-long carcass with its perception and mind that I describe the world, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.)¹⁰

How to realize inner peace? There are important teachings guiding to inculcation of inner peace in Buddhism. Inner peace is achieved through:

a) Mindfulness (Sati): Cultivating awareness of one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions.

b) Meditation: Practices like Samatha (tranquility) and Vipassana (insight) meditation.

c) Overcoming the Three Poisons: Greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha).

Understanding these components as fundamentals of peace preached in Buddhism is essential at the outset itself.

3.1.2. Non-violence (*ahimsa*)

Another important concept for inner peace is non-violence. Though extreme non-violence is not accepted in Buddhism, non-violence is given a significant value in Buddhist ethics. The first precept out of the Five Precepts in Buddhism is to abstain from killing or harming living beings. It is elaborated in many discourses, such as *Sāleyyaka sutta* as

Idha gahapatayo ekaccho pañātīpātī hoti luddho lohitapāṇī hatapahathe nivīṭṭho adāyāpanno pañabhūtesu.” “Idha gahapatayo ekaccho pañātīpātī hoti luddho lohitapāṇī hatapahathe nivīṭṭho adāyāpanno pañabhūtesu.

(...Here someone kills living beings; he is murderous, bloodyhanded, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings...)¹¹

The right to live in peace is assured in Buddhism for all forms of living beings.

¹⁰ *Samyutta Nikāya* (2000): 158.

¹¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* (380): 380.

The *Dhammapada* states to inculcate non-violence and keep pity towards the whole beings. At this point, the stanza also reminds the statement in the Mahābhārata.

One should never do that to another which he considers injurious to his self. This, in brief, is the rule of virtue. One acts differently by giving way to desire, becomes guilty of sin.¹²

This could be compared with the following extraction from the *Dhammapada*.

Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa, sabbe bhāyanti maccuno;

Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā, na haneyya na ghātaye.

(All tremble at violence; all fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill.) (*Dhp* 129).¹³

This universal principle of ethics is highlighted in other theistic religions and Confucianism, too.

3.1.3. Compassion (*Karuṇā*)

Compassion is one of the Four Sublime Abodes (Brahmaviharas/ Divine Abodes). It involves wishing for the alleviation of suffering for all beings. If somebody feels sorry when he/ she comprehends another's suffering with empathy, it is called *karuṇā*.

.... *Para dukkhe sati sādhuṇaṃ hadayaṃ paṇaṃ karotīti karuṇā* ...¹⁴

Visuddhimagga

This doctrine, as per the very definition itself, provides the base for keeping inner peace to keep a harmonious society based on inner peace.

Loving-Kindness (Metta)

Another building block of inner peace out of the Four Sublime Abodes (Brahmaviharas) is *mettā* (*Loving-Kindness*). It involves cultivating goodwill towards all beings. The Metta Sutta (Sn 1.8) encourages human beings to spread loving kindness towards whole types of living creatures. As scholars interpret, the Buddha has emphasized there the beings of different sizes, living in different spaces, either moving or unmoving (*tasā vā thāvarā vā* – as per scholars, flora and fauna), should be paid loving kindness. The sutta illustrates how kindness should be spread as,

Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttāṃ āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe,

Evampi sabbabhūtesu mānaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ.

(Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.)¹⁵

¹² Mahābhārata (1905): 251.

¹³ *The Dhammapada* (1985): 43.

¹⁴ *Visuddhimagga* IX. (2010): 294.

¹⁵ *Sutta Nipāta* (2001): 19

This is to elaborate on how the Buddhist teaching of loving kindness is universal, spreading beyond the cultural, social, racial, national, or regional demarcations. This leads to the universal, global reconciliation amongst the whole human beings.

3.1.4. Right speech

Verbal communication was the sole means of expression during the period of 6th century B.C. Sangahavathu sutta (A.N. 4.32) mentions how the Buddha emphasizes the importance of kind and pleasant words (peyyavajja) in communication.

*Cattārimāni bhikkhave sangahavathuni. Katamāni
cattāri? Dānaṃ, peyyavajjaṃ, atthacariya, samanattatā.
Imāni kho bhikkhave cattāri sangahavathunīti.*¹⁶

The importance of the right speech is asserted in the Noble Eight-Fold Path (as *Sammā Vācā*), too. In the Vibhaṅga Sutta (S.N. 45.8), the Buddha describes right speech as:

*Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā? Yā kho, bhikkhave, musāvādā veramaṇī, piṣuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī, samphappalāpā veramaṇī ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammāvācā.*¹⁷

In the modern world, conflicts can be avoided if the right speech is assured throughout the world. Further, there will not be need of the court of law where there is right speech is practiced abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, and from idle chatter. This ultimately leads to peace within and in the society.

Interdependence

Buddhism teaches that all phenomena are interconnected. How could this teaching be important in establishing peace within individuals and the society? The existence of the whole phenomenon is caused by mental conditions. The very first stanza of the Dhammapada highlights it as,

*Manō pubbangamā dhammā
manō setthā manōmayā*

(All phenomena spring from the mind. Mind matters most which is chief, and therefore everything is mind-made....)¹⁸

The stanza further illustrates how the mind, when it is pure (pleasant) or impure (defiled), influences on whole life. This teaching could further be explained that the person is the basic component of the society. When a person is ruined, society also collapses. A peaceful society depends on peaceful people. The peace of the person depends on the mental culture he has developed.

¹⁶ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (1888). 32

¹⁷ *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (1898): 09.

¹⁸ *The Dhammapada* (1985): 21.

3.1.5. Equanimity (*Upekkha*)

This is the fourth Brahmavihara out of Four Sublime Abodes, involving a balanced, unbiased state of mind. It helps maintain inner peace in the face of life's ups and downs. The person who can manage his emotions at Eight Worldly Conditions and withstand before all of them is capable of having equanimity.

The eight worldly conditions are known as the *aṭṭha loka dhamma* in the Paṭhamalokadhamma sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya. They can also be described as four pairs of opposite conditions experienced by all human beings.

- i. Gain (*labho*) and loss (*alabho*)
- ii. Fame (*vaso*) and disgrace (*ayaso*)
- iii. Praise (*pasansā*) and blame (*nindā*)
- iv. Pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*)¹⁹

Gain (*labho*) and loss (*alabho*)

A layperson or a clergy, being an ordinary person, might experience multifaceted forms of gain and loss. For the laity, there may be gains and losses in terms of material possessions and assets, family members, friends and relatives, and even immaterial things such as relationships, status, reputation, etc. When one gets either of these, he might be happy, but when he loses the same, he may be unhappy. Yet, the Buddha's emphasis is to bear up both conditions with the same attitude. For the monastics who depend on donations from the householders, gain and loss can be considered in terms of their essential requisites such as robes (*cīvara*), food (*piṇḍapāta*), lodgings (*senāsana*), and medicines (*bhesajja*). In any case of these gains and losses, one has to stay unmoved, showing equanimity. Clinging to them is not approved in the Buddhist teachings.

Fame (*vaso*) and disgrace (*ayaso*)

Worldly beings always seek fame, yet they gain disgrace, too. When they do not have equanimity to bear it, it will be a kind of mental illness. Therefore, even if it is an appreciation or else putting down, one has to manage emotions with equanimity.

Most ordinary worldly beings tend to desire popularity and fame and look at their well-being and success to be a result of how well-liked they are by relatives and friends, colleagues and members of society alike. They can't stand not being popular and being criticized negatively, assuming that such is a criticism of their integrity and an indication of a failure in their success and worth. They are unaware of the fact that every human being undergoes such negative judgments in life and that all such incidents prove to be temporary and short-lived. As soon as one becomes more popular, there are greater chances of facing criticism as well. A Buddhist student of the Buddha's teachings should be vigilant and unbiased in both praise and blame. This will assure equanimity in mind, leading to inner peace.

¹⁹ Aṅguttara Nikāya: Aṭṭhaka Nipāta. (1899): 157.

Praise (*pasamsā*) and blame (*nindā*)

Worldly unenlightened beings desire the praise of others and are happy and lustful when praised. They are low-spirited and disappointed when criticized, disapproved, or condemned for something they have done. This is because they believe that their happiness, value, and acceptance in society depend on the approval and validation they receive from other people through compliments. Even when they do something that deserves condemnation, they cannot accept it and change. They do not even know that it is natural for anyone to be praised and criticized at some point in life, either in moderation or in excess. There is what the Buddha had espoused: no human being is not criticized somewhere in this world.

Porāṇametaṃ atulaṃ netam ajjatanāṃ iva

Niṃdanti tuṇhīmāsīnaṃ niṃdanti bahubhāṇīnaṃ

Mithabhāṇimpi niṃdanti natthi loke anindito.

(This, Atula, is an old saying; it is not one of today only: they blame those who are silent, they blame those who speak too much. Those speaking little too they blame. No one avoids blame in this world.)²⁰

There are indeed quite a number of examples in Buddhist narratives whereby even the Buddha himself was reproved and criticized by someone. Here, the teachings of the Buddha and his character itself by example guide the humans to be with equanimity at both praise and blame so that inner peace is not damage. When one preserves inner peace with calmness, his behaviour may not be a threat to social harmony.

Pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*)

The unenlightened person would move naturally towards pleasant experiences (*sukha kāmāni bhūtāni*)²¹ and away from painful ones (*dukkhapatikkulam*). They are dominated by pleasant feelings arising through external causes such as visual objects, sound, odour, taste, body sensations, and mental objects via the six senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When they encounter pleasant stimuli, they react with desire, pleasure, and longing for even more pleasant experiences. Conversely, they react to unpleasant occurrences with distaste, ill-humors, and rejection. All this is driven by the erroneous belief that pleasant experiences bring happiness and good luck, while unpleasant experiences discourage one from achieving happiness and success in life. This is a result of ignorance regarding the universal phenomenon of all experiences – impermanence (*anicca*), dissatisfaction (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). They also erroneously assume that their sadness and happiness result from external events, not realizing that the nice feelings lead to suffering once they die because they are temporary and painful sensations that constitute suffering in essence. The instruction of the Buddha does not lie in the avoidance of pleasant experiences but in enjoying them in a mood of equanimity free from craving for pleasant

²⁰ The *Dhammapada* (1985): 58.

²¹ Ibid 43.

experiences and aversion for unpleasant ones and insight into their conditioned and transient nature. This cognitive maturity is the expectation of Buddhism to assure both internal well-being and social well-being.

3.2. Reaction to the eight worldly conditions

Worldlings react to the eight worldly conditions with craving or aversion, and it is under the influence of the three mental impurities: greed (*rāga*), aversion (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). There exist eight Noble Ones who have achieved the path or the attainment of one of the four supermundane states in Buddhism via practicing the Noble Eightfold Path. They are Stream Enterer (*Sotapanna*), Once Returner (*Sakadagami*), Non-Returner (*Anagami*), and Arahant. An Arahant, with the mental impurities completely eradicated, is not agitated by the eight worldly conditions. A Non-Returner, having abandoned the bonds of lust for sensual pleasures (*kama rāga*) and aversion (*patigha*), is also not affected by these states. But the Stream Entering and Once Returner, still having some of these bonds, will react to the world's conditions with lust or aversion, but weaker than worldly people. Of two such examples in Buddhist scriptures, those of the Buddha's main benefactress, Visakha, and the Buddha's main benefactor, Anathapindika, can be mentioned here. Both attained Stream Enterer, and both approached the Buddha with tear-stained faces after learning of their relative's demise.

In the above manner, one should not be shakable before the worldly conditions, whatever they are. In the Maha Mangala sutta of the Sutta Nipātha of the Khuddaka Nikaya, the Buddha has stated how one should be unmoved by any one of the eight worldly conditions, which the Buddha has described as a great blessing.

Phuṭṭhassa loka dhammehi, cittam yassa na kampati,

Asokaṃ virajaṃ khemaṃ, etaṃ maṅgala muttamaṃ

(A mind that, when touched by the ways of the world,

is unshaken, sorrowless, dustless, at rest: This is the highest protection.)²²

This is the most important point in managing equanimity. Coping with all forms of ups and downs is realized by the enlightened. Hence, they do not cling to them and never get angry or pay attention to them.

3.3. Middle way

The Buddha has taught us to avoid extremes to practice the middle path. One who perceives the phenomena with the two extremes (*dvaya nissita* – *Channa Sutta S.N.*) must continuously suffer in *saṃsāra*, making conflicts. The extremes emphasized here are eternalism (*sassatavāda*) and annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*). Both are forms of the theory of egoism (*ātmavāda*). All the conflicts are under egoism. Giving up the extremes, one can be free from any form of conflict in either the inner world or in society without clinging to any form of views. This can be applied to conflict resolution and peaceful living.

²² *Sutta Nipāta* (2001): 33.

3.4. Forgiveness

Harboring a grudge is never considered a step to avoid any form of conflict. The importance of forgiveness is emphasized in many Buddhist teachings. The Dhammapada states:

*Akkocchi maṃ avadhi maṃ, ajini maṃ ahāsi me;
Ye ca taṃ upanayhanti, veraṃ tesaṃ na sammati.*

(He abused me, he struck me, he overpowered me, he robbed me. Those who harbor such thoughts do not still their hatred.)²³

*The Dhammapada also preaches
Na hi verena verāni
sammantīdha kudācanam,
Averena ca sammanti,
esa dhammo sanantano*

(Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an eternal law.)²⁴

After World War II, while everyone was blaming Japan for the bombing, the contemporary Sri Lankan president addressed the gathering, quoting this stanza so that everyone was guided for peacekeeping in the recent world political history.

3.5. Peace as a Practice

In Buddhism, both the avoidance (virati) and practice are stressed. Hence, peace is not just an absence of conflict but an active practice. Here, the opposing emotion (mettā) against hatred is to be practiced.

*Mettāya, bhikkhave, cetovimuttiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulikatāya yānikatāya vatthukatāya anuṭṭhitāya paricitāya susamāradhāya...*²⁵

(Monks, for one whose awareness-release through good will is cultivated, developed, pursued, handed the reins and taken as a basis, given a grounding, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken...)

The Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh often said:

“Peace in oneself, peace in the world.”²⁶

This encapsulates the Buddhist view that inner and outer peace are interconnected.

In conclusion, Buddhist teachings on peace emphasize the cultivation of inner tranquility, nonviolence, compassion, and understanding. These qualities are seen as the foundation for creating a peaceful world. The path to peace in Buddhism is a holistic one, involving mental cultivation, ethical

²³ The Dhammapada (1985): 21.

²⁴ Ibid: 22.

²⁵ Aṅguttara Nikāya (1900): 342.

²⁶ Nghiem (2008): 145 - 148.

conduct, and the development of wisdom and compassion. These are accepted fundamentals in almost all Buddhist traditions worldwide.

IV. THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN INNER AND GLOBAL PEACE

Buddhism underscores the interdependence of all phenomena, encapsulated in the concept of dependent co-origination (*Paticca Samuppāda*) as its central philosophy. The whole teachings are based on this universal principle in Buddhism. This principle illustrates that personal actions and attitudes inevitably influence the broader social and environmental context. Inner peace, achieved through individual effort, acts as a foundation for collective harmony.

The Buddha's teaching in the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta* (D.N. 26) describes the ideal ruler as one who upholds Dhamma by practicing generosity, moral discipline, and compassion.

Tena hi tvam tāta dhammaṃ yeva nissāya dhammaṃ sakkaronto dhammaṃ garu-karonto dhammaṃ mānento dhammaṃ pūjento dhammaṃ apacāyamāno, dhammaddhajo Dhamma-ketu dhammādhipateyyo dhammikaṃ rakkhā-varaṇa-guttiṃ saṃvidahassu anto-janasmiṃ....

(Thus, dear son, relying only on the Dhamma, honoring and venerating the Dhamma as your guide, establish just protection, shelter, and guard for all your subjects.)²⁷

This discourse highlights the reciprocal relationship between the inner virtue of a leader and the well-being of their subjects. When leaders cultivate inner peace, it reflects in their governance, fostering societal harmony.

Modern examples illustrate this connection. Mindfulness-based programs in schools have been shown to reduce bullying and enhance emotional intelligence among students, creating more compassionate learning environments. Similarly, community meditation initiatives, such as those led by Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village, have fostered reconciliation in post-conflict regions. These cases demonstrate how personal transformation through mindfulness can ripple outward, contributing to broader societal peace.

V. INNER PEACE AS A TOOL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution often requires a shift from adversarial approaches to empathetic understanding. Buddhist teachings provide valuable insights into this process. The *Metta Sutta* (Loving-Kindness Discourse) advocates for the cultivation of boundless goodwill toward all beings, transcending personal biases and animosities. Both biotic and abiotic worlds are assured with their well-being as per Buddhism.

In the *Kakacūpama Sutta* (M.N. 21), the Buddha advises practitioners to maintain patience and loving-kindness even in the face of severe provocation.

²⁷ *Dīgha Nikāya* (1995): 397.

Ubhatodaṇḍakena cepi, bhikkhave, kakacena corā ocarakā aṅgamaṅgāni okanteyyūṃ, tatrāpi yo mano padūseyya, na me so tena sāsana-karo. Tatrāpi vo, bhikkhave, evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ: ‘na ceva no cittaṃ vipariṇataṃ bhavissati, na ca pāpikaṃ vācaṃ nicchāressāma, hitānukampī ca viharissāma mettacittā na dosantarā.

(Even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who harbors ill-will at heart on that account would not carry out my teaching.)²⁸

This powerful teaching emphasizes the unshakable nature of inner peace in overcoming external hostility.

In practical terms, techniques such as mindful dialogue and compassion training have been successfully applied in peacebuilding efforts. For instance, the Mindfulness-Based Peace Education (MBPE) model integrates mindfulness and conflict resolution strategies to address tensions in divided communities. This approach has been particularly effective in promoting reconciliation in regions such as Sri Lanka and Rwanda, where deep-seated ethnic and cultural conflicts have hindered peace.

VI. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MINDFUL LIVING

Beyond conflict resolution, inner peace also contributes to sustainable development. The environmental crisis, a pressing global challenge, can be addressed through the Buddhist principle of right livelihood (*Samma Ājīva*). By fostering mindfulness and ethical consumption, individuals can reduce their ecological footprint and advocate for sustainable practices.

As scholars point out, the *Sigālovada Sutta* (DN 31) provides guidance on ethical living, emphasizing the importance of moderation and mindful consumption. According to them, A noble disciple protects both himself and others, avoids harm, and engages in practices that benefit society. When earning wealth, one has to act like a bee collecting nectar while paving the way for the trees to have their fruits.²⁹

bhoge saṃharamānassa bhamarasseva iriyato

These teachings encourage individuals to adopt lifestyles that harmonize personal well-being with ecological sustainability.

For example, eco-villages inspired by Buddhist values, such as the Eco Dharma Centre in Spain, exemplify how mindfulness and simplicity can coexist with ecological responsibility. These communities serve as models for integrating inner peace and sustainability, emphasizing that mindful living extends beyond personal well-being to encompass planetary health.

VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND GLOBAL STRATEGIES

To harness the transformative potential of inner peace on a global scale, it is essential to integrate Buddhist-inspired practices into public policy and

²⁸ *Majjhima Nikāya* (1995): 223.

²⁹ *Dīgha Nikāya* (1995): 466.

education systems. Governments and international organizations can adopt mindfulness-based interventions to address social, educational, and healthcare challenges.

Educational curricula, for example, can incorporate mindfulness training to equip future generations with the emotional resilience and empathy needed to navigate an increasingly complex world. Similarly, healthcare systems can utilize mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) techniques to improve mental health outcomes, particularly in post-conflict and disaster-affected regions.

The *Parābhava Sutta* (Sn 1.6) warns against the causes of societal decline, including greed, hatred, and delusion. By addressing these root causes through mindful governance and education, policymakers can create conditions conducive to sustainable development and world peace.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Inner peace is not merely an abstract ideal but a tangible catalyst for sustainable world peace, which is eventually manifested in the whole world. By fostering personal transformation through mindfulness, ethical living, and compassion, individuals can contribute to a ripple effect that promotes global harmony. This paper emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift in addressing global challenges, emphasizing that true peace begins within. As humanity stands at the crossroads of unprecedented challenges, embracing inner peace as a cornerstone for sustainable development offers a profound opportunity to create a compassionate and harmonious world.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE IN THE DIGITAL WORLD: REFLECTIONS ON BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

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Abstract:

This paper discusses the reflection of Buddhism teachings on building inner peace in the digital era. Digital reality, as an inseparable aspect, brings influence and progress in the development of human life. However, behind the progress that technology offers, humans risk becoming trapped in the fast flow of information and a culture of consumerism. Humans are also now seeking existence and meaning in their lives from what is standardized in the digital world. Besides that, the digital sphere has the potential to cause anxiety and fear due to the very dynamic and massive flow of the digital world, as there is no clear distinction between truth and fake. It is important to maintain peace of mind and heart by realizing the sparkle of the digital world, including realizing that everything we do in the digital world has its consequences. By contemplating the teachings of Buddhism, such as the concept of *sammā-vācā* and *sati* (mindfulness), we get an ethical perspective in determining how we should act.

Keywords: *digital world, human existence, sammā-vācā, mindfulness.*

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGITAL WORLD

The digital world has become an inseparable reality today, this can be seen by the massive use of the internet through devices to access social media with various applications, online shopping activities, surfing through search sites, and so on. The enormous use of the internet is a change and development of lifestyle in the era of globalization. Moreover, restrictions on social activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic have also triggered the surge or shift of some daily activities to the digital world. With this phenomenon, we are presented with convenience, efficiency, and perhaps freedom in fulfilling what we want

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in the digital reality or virtual world. Just imagine sitting all day or lying down, then simply clicking our fingers on our gadgets to order goods or food, enjoy entertainment from video and audio, or get various kinds of information, including viral social media conversations.

The opening up of information and relationships in the digital world through social media and other networks has created disruptions that form new patterns of information and networking relationships in various fields. Computerization and digitalization have touched all aspects of our lives and can be called the digital revolution. For example, in the digital era, anyone can now report what is happening around them through video blogging, video recordings, or citizen journalism. We do not need to wait for updates on events/news from mainstream media such as television or newspapers. Still, the real situation is directly obtained from netizens (citizens) who uploaded on social media. This new relationship also has implications for realizing a rapid response through high social care and extraordinary attention. Social media user communities can become a new force in questioning an interest or concern in certain issues that have a direct impact. This phenomenon can also be called “the power of social media”. Humans are merely components of the media communication system. They become part of an anonymous network and act as message distributors within the Internet of Things. Human who are controlled by media, function as a media, and adapt their habits to digital technology can be termed as *homo digitalis*¹.

The influence of information technology has changed many people’s behaviour, along with the massive use of gadgets. For example, with the advancement of the telecommunications world, a person can communicate and exchange messages easily through devices with applications and in real-time, even though they are very far apart. Not only that, but video meeting applications also allow people to gather in cyberspace (placelessness) to discuss certain topics, conduct learning, religious worship, music concerts, and so on. Furthermore, the sophistication of Artificial intelligence (AI) today has helped humans in various fields, such as work, accessing basic information, unmanned vehicles, and so on, which indirectly helps solve human cognitive problems. Digital technology is starting to replace analog as the new standard in the business world, and the emergence of new computing technology functions, such as storing and supplying data digitally, replacing manual functions previously performed by typists or secretaries². With a brief description of the phenomenon above, there is no problem regarding the benefits of information technology that provides changes or advances in human civilization. Smartphones have become the epicentre of people’s lives and rapidly lead us to an era filled with the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and big data³.

¹ Hardiman, F. B. (2021): (38 - 39).

² Sudibyo, A. (2019): 208.

³ Ibid., p. 209.

However, amid these changes, the sophistication of internet technology using gadgets seems to drown humans in a world that is unlimited in space and time, full of freedom, image games, fulfilment of needs, and so on, or termed “No Gadget, No Life.” Of course, many consequences can become serious ethical problems, such as lies in information, violation of privacy, cyberbullying, etc. Clicking or typing comments is more tempting and has an instant or massive impact on each social media user. Activeness in cyberspace also has consequences in surveillance, especially digital surveillance systems by media companies that will control and modify the behaviour of Internet or social media users. Modification certainly has an interest in generating profits, especially if it refers to persuasive communication to impulsively buy certain goods or trigger the fear of missing information that encourages always commenting on social media. Digital consumption also allows many people to use social media tools not for dialogue or broadening horizons but as a means of excessive self-worship⁴. Digital intelligence is also only used to waste time looking for entertainment and excessive information, not suggestions for productive or creative actions in the digital world.

With the massiveness of the internet, we are formed or intervened by what is standardized by the internet; in other words, we live according to what people say on the internet (usually through “viral” something). This can be referred to as banality, where we are too immersed in cyberspace’s frenetic world and think it is the real world. This problem is also like Plato’s allegory of the cave, where the prisoners in the cave saw the shadows of objects reflected on the wall by passing torches and thought it was the real reality. Are we now in the same position as those shadows? It is heading in that direction, where the climate of rationality has gone away and been replaced with a consumptive, one-dimensional, or uncritical society.

The trap of consumerism is currently unbreakable. It may seem like an ordinary thing, but massive access to the internet can also impact unconscious consumptive behaviour. We can analyse this trap as if we live based on what is standardized by the internet, so it is possible that what we need has been disguised (indistinguishable) from what we want. Advertisements are scattered on social media timelines, and then the existence of viral content, whether tourist attractions, food, fashion, goods, and so on, makes us indirectly covet and swallow the imaginations or signs in it as something we need. We seem hypnotized by the frenzy even though we only see the content.

Indeed, as Jean Baudrillard argues, economic problems have shifted to consumption activities that are infiltrated with the desire to consume sign-value. Exploitation and profit now dominate through signs and the systems they create. The world of consumption is considered something that shows freedom. Still, people are increasingly “simulated,” deceived, and deceived in the many games of images and discourses that massively begin to replace the human experience of reality. Baudrillard also says the simulation world

⁴ Ibid., p.249.

exaggerates the “reality” of something they want to describe. Furthermore, it is said that reality is no longer stable and cannot be traced with traditional scientific concepts because images and discourses have directly replaced human experience⁵. With these systematized signs or meanings, people are not as free as they think.

This situation of consumerism cannot be separated from the characteristics of contemporary society or postmodernism, where new types of information, knowledge, and technology are rapidly developing and are considered a higher stage of development of capitalism with capital penetration and homogenization in all corners of the world, and creation of semiotic system that blurs the distinction between reality and non-reality⁶. On the other hand, consumption is closely tied to a system of sign manipulation, where the meaning of sign generates false need. The consequences of the postmodern era are marked by globalization. Hyperreality becomes a buzzword for a duplicate or copy of decodified reality.

As long as social media and the internet continue to be used by the public (even as basic needs), this post-truth phenomenon will not be prevented, let alone stopped. People will be inclined to believe what is attached to their train of thought. People will always seek information according to their preferences (tastes, interests, feelings, and so on). This post-truth symptom indicates the neglect of common sense rationality in logic that connects reality with an understanding of the facts of reality. Social media is the main vehicle for post-truth to spread understanding and messages quickly without caring about its truth values⁷. The reality of post-truth in politics, specifically related to the politicization of religion, produces subjective assessments that are associated with the values of certain political interests and are followed by various populist discourses and distorted information, especially on social media⁸. Information shared on social media does not have professional gatekeepers to check the content, so consumers are used to determining whether the source and information can be considered credible. We are forced to swim or drown in a sea of thought constructions that are increasingly difficult to distinguish from facts⁹.

Ethical questions about who should be responsible for spreading fake news or hoaxes on social media timelines that disturb the public will always arise. Social media has brought joy, excitement, and new conveniences to society, resulting in a fantastic increase in social media users. However, social media also demean, blaspheme, judge, and slander others¹⁰. We analogize, for example, that social media is a free highway, so the conflicts that occur in social media

⁵ Kumbara, A. A. N. A. (2023): (317).

⁶ Ibid., p. 319 - 322.

⁷ Purba, H., & Sitorus, F. K. (2023): (5).

⁸ Kumbara, Op.Cit. (2023), p. 322.

⁹ Purba, H., & Sitorus, F. K., Op. Cit, p. 8.

¹⁰ Sudibyo, A. (2019). Loc.Cit, p. 1.

are just like roadside quarrels, namely cases between users or hoax makers and social media users. However, the next question is how responsible this highway's makers are. Are they not taking steps to stop this kind of thing? This suspicion is also based on the fact that a highway cannot be made with a small budget, but it must involve a fantastic investment. There could be something to hide or personal data being used for business purposes¹¹. Along the 'free' highway, there are also billboards, banners, and so on that disturb and try to influence the decisions of the riders of the "free" highway in cyberspace or the internet through advertisements that pop up when we access information/ social media¹². In addition, there is a suspicion that CCTV cameras are lurking and watching the 'free' highway. Surveillance systems can study patterns and forms of behaviour, including directing future behaviour.

Not only does the digital world bring consequences on the value of truth, but it also brings problems to the crisis of existence, where we become media-controlled beings, but external algorithms also regulate existence, fooled by images made by intelligent machines, including in the end, very concerned with the issue of privacy and sovereignty of each individual. Not only that, the distance from the climate of rationality influences anxiety, worry, and fear, which may become a new problem amid rolling mental health issues caused by interacting with virtual/ digital realities that almost more than 8-10 hours. This problem tends to be psychological, but it has become a big concern because of the massive influence of content on human life. Even originality is becoming difficult to distinguish from artificiality.

Reflecting on the Cambridge Analytica case, one can say it is one of the biggest data abuse cases in the world. According to the CNBC Indonesia article, 87 million Facebook users' data was misused¹³. What is highlighted is that the data was used, among other things, for the benefit of the 2016 United States presidential election, which saw Donald Trump become the 45th president. In the news, it was also reported that Cambridge Analytica was known to be financed by a billionaire named Robert Mercer, who was a major donor to the party supporting Donald Trump. This scandal was revealed by a Canadian data consultant who had previously worked at Facebook. The working mechanism of this data utilization is to create a model to exploit, including targeting hatred in their hearts.

In Indonesia, there are several cases related to data, one of which is the various phenomena of data hacking. For example, in 2020 there was a hack experienced by an e-commerce company, Tokopedia, where Tokopedia

¹¹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹² Ibid., p.2

¹³ Sorongan, T. P. (2022). *Skandal! Mark Zuckerberg Digugat, Terkait Cambridge Analytica*, accessed on [February 10, 2025] CNBC Indonesia, available at <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20220524120031-4-341432/skandal-mark-zuckerberg-digugat-terkait-cambridge-analytica>.

experienced a hack with an estimated 91 million active accounts¹⁴ and 7 million merchant accounts. Meanwhile, a hacking case shocked people with a hacker named Bjorka,¹⁵ who in 2022 claimed that he had 26 million IndiHome customer browsing histories, 105 million KPU data, and 1.3 billion SIM Card registration data. In 2024, it was very hot news that the National Data Centre was hacked, which resulted in the disruption of state administrative services and the loss of important data. Data hacking eventually led to an emphasis on the importance of regulation, anticipation, and literacy for personal data protection or security in the cyber world.

With a brief overview of the phenomena mentioned above, it is very interesting if we start to explore the issue of how human existence in this digital world, including the chaotic issues of privacy, truth, and profit interests, is it still necessary to talk about ethics in this context? The screen (digital) era has now changed the paradigm of understanding human existence from *homo sapiens* to *homo digitalis*, which means “finger man” because now humans confirm their existence through their fingers by clicking. Humans will inevitably experience a sense of certainty (in terms of existence) if their self-image is increasingly visible or displayed in uploaded photos, videos, texts, and so on. The “finger man” does not doubt his existence; instead, they are bound to click anything to stay updated and continue to exist in social media¹⁶. The digital revolution ultimately forces us to rethink how to understand truth, beauty, and goodness in new conditions when the demarcation between fiction and reality is increasingly blurred by the speed and overflow of information that does not give reflective pause¹⁷. The dishonesty in the digital world seems to have affected communication and public sanity, not to mention the forms of cognitive bias due to the massive flow of information that forms knowledge and is likely to be formed from errors or distortions.

In the context of *homo digitalis*, browsing activities become important; the human mind focuses on the finger. The existence of *homo digitalis* is determined by its digital actions such as uploading, ‘chatting,’ ‘posting,’ and, of course, ‘selfie’¹⁸. With it, he shares or shows off the need for recognition. Humans will still be collectively valuable but lose their authority and be governed by external algorithms¹⁹. Human eyes and ears fall into the trap of communication

¹⁴ CNN Indonesia (2020). Kronologi Lengkap 91 Juta Akun Tokopedia Bocor dan Dijual, accessed on [February 11, 2025], available at <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20200503153210-185-499553/kronologi-lengkap-91-juta-akun-tokopedia-bocor-dan-dijual>.

¹⁵ Putranto Saptohutomo, A. (2023). Sepak Terjang Peretas Bjorka: Bocorkan Data IndiHome sampai Paspur. Kompas.com, accessed on [February 28, 2025], available at <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/07/07/05150041/sepak-terjang-peretas-bjorka--bocorkan-data-indihome-sampai-paspur?page=all>.

¹⁶ Hardiman, F. B. (2021). Loc.Cit., p. 39 - 40.

¹⁷ Hardiman, F. B. (2021). Loc.Cit., p. 39 - 40.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 39 - 40.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 40 - 41

networks that are free but also carry brutal, destructive potential. In the same person, behaviour in the real world may be inversely proportional to behaviour in the digital world.

II. REFLECTION ON BUDDHIST TEACHING

In the context of the digital world, inner peace is an important aspect that must be realized. There are at least several reasons for this, including: first, cognitive bias²⁰ allows us to be trapped in ego and swayed by biased facts and information; second, there is a trap of constantly carving or seeking more and always following what is standardized by the internet in the form of trends, goods and so on which leads to materialism; third, the psychological effects on mental health are no longer avoidable due to the inability to resist the explosion consumptive trap or the trap of the flow of information that always interrupts. Anxiety about good and correct information has become a problem amidst the indifference to privacy and the gnawing cult of pleasure.

This may seem cynical because not all the effects of surfing the digital world will trap us, but if this is not realized wholeheartedly, it can become a blunder or a silent killer for our peace of heart and life. Being aware of what we can control within ourselves and how we are living now is important (mindfulness). It may seem easy to understand cognitively, but it requires practice and effort. In all situations, we should be aware of our fragility in this life, as conditions can change and nothing can stop change, as the Buddha also taught us in the concept of *anicca* and *sati*.

Information and the various things we encounter in today's digital world are fragile, too, as they change quickly and are temporary (pleasant or sad). Human life is very varied with all kinds of changing conditions. The Buddha did not reject this, but he focused on what all human beings have, which is weakness or fragility, even though humans can achieve great things for themselves. Our egos as humans are easily dazzled by the pleasures available in surfing the digital world, but what is truly behind the dazzle is the harsh reality that it all eventually fades away.

The ego is often seen as the basis of all experience that forms an understanding of the world through the act of consciousness. The ego is always present in every fixed act of consciousness or as a 'self-identical' being in every change of experience. The ego also gives meaning to the subject; both *cogito* and ego strongly imply the existence of a fixed substance. However, it is Buddhism's view that the ego as the idea of the 'self' behind all consciousness may be a delusion, an erroneous belief that produces a dangerous view of 'I' or 'selfhood,' selfish desires, attachment, hatred, egoism, and so on. This is related to Buddhism's basic teaching of the three features of reality, namely, *dukkha* (suffering), *anicca* (the continuous change of reality), and *anattā* (the view of the absence of a metaphysical self or non-self).

²⁰ McIntyre, L. C. (2018): (55).

Full immersion in the digital world interrupts and distracts many aspects of life, sometimes leading to the inability to distinguish between real and virtual reality. The standardization of the internet world, lifestyles, and the flow of information eventually dazzles us and leads to endless self-indulgence or the dumbing down of the mind. In this context, we can relate that desire will always be a source of suffering. *Atta* as a fixed or complete self-concept (*sakkayaditthi*) that we often think of as ‘mine,’ ‘I,’ or ‘my existence’ (*etam mama, so ham eso me atta ti*) is a wrong way of looking at phenomena or a false view (*micchaditthi*). *Micchaditthi* is a product of the fickle-mindedness of some *Samana* and *Brāhmanas* who experience and are obsessed with their desires (*tanha*)²¹.

In *Dhammapada* verses 335 and 341²², it is said that in beings, there arises a sense of delight in pursuing sensual objects, and they become attached to sensual desires. Being inclined to pleasant things and constantly pursuing sensual pleasures, they become victims of birth and decay. Not only that, in this world, whoever is overcome by low and poisonous cravings his suffering will increase like *Birana* grass that grows quickly because it is well watered. Desire is the driving force behind all human creations and activities, but on the other hand, we often find that there is a stark contrast between people’s desires and reality. The gap between the desire for stability (a condition considered good and desirable) and the instability of the world is a simple explanation for the suffering that accompanies humans and remains difficult to overcome. Based on this context, aren’t we also often anxious or suffering from having to accept the reality of the difference between what is driven by desire and what is standardized in the virtual world? This difference will be endless, making us seem lost and race to keep up with the flow of change very quickly.

The digital world is filled with numbers and algorithms born from the rapid development of technology and information²³. There is a new world where everything is open, from work to having fun. However, behind all that, the digital world faces a paradox between freedom and surveillance or freedom and brutality²⁴. Freedom is shown by gadget users now becoming masters of digital buttons that move them from one situation to another. Freedom in the digital world is also manifested in the ease of content creation by individual media users. Anyone, regardless of their background or creative skill, can create content using relatively affordable equipment. In the digital world, enjoyment has become the primary measure of success.

This certainly changes the landscape of creativity and gives voice to many people to express themselves. Digital technology has also enabled diverse voices and perspectives to be much more inclusive than before, which were narrow

²¹ Dessein, Bart (ed.). (1999): [10].

²² Samaggi Phala. (2016). *Tanha Vagga*. accessed on [February 22, 2025], available at <https://samaggi-phala.or.id/tipitaka/tanha-vagga/>.

²³ Wattimena, R. A. A. (2023): (172).

²⁴ Hardiman, F. B. (2021). *Loc.Cit.*, p. 20.

and tended to be monopolized by mainstream media production²⁵. Meanwhile, active internet use indirectly impacts the knowledge of personal data and the learning of internet behaviour until finally, supervision occurs. Then, the situation is reversed, where control and modification in internet behaviour affect gadget users searching for selected items or what content they might be able to watch. One risk or danger is identity theft, where names, addresses, identification numbers, or financial data are stolen for illegal purposes such as fraud or financial crimes. In addition, hacking social media accounts can also negatively impact the reputation and security of each social media user²⁶.

Therefore, training the mind is the best way to control oneself. In Buddhism, *sati*, or mindfulness, as an enlightenment factor, is derived from the act of recollecting and reflecting on the teaching one has heard²⁷. There are four establishments on mindfulness, which are written in *Samyutta Nikaya* (SN. 48:10): “He dwells contemplating the body in the body... phenomena in phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure regarding the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness”²⁸. Mindfulness establishes the presence of the object and thereby makes it available to scrutiny and discernment²⁹. With this context, the decision is a key to human freedom in surfing the digital world. The decision to follow anything, including being aware of the consequences hidden in it, helps at least in realizing this condition. It is important to place the awareness of digital actors as tool users and maintain human dignity amid the great current of erosion of consciousness. Humans will still be collectively valuable but will lose their authority and be regulated by external algorithms³⁰.

Human eyes and ears fall into the trap of a free communication network but also bring brutal, destructive potential. In understanding the digital world, a person's behaviour in the real world can be the opposite of their behaviour in the digital world. Humans face an instant culture and shallowness, where self-pleasure is the main reference, and economic gain ultimately becomes the highest value³¹. Depth of thinking, critical attitudes, and realizing social justice can be difficult in the digital world. Modernity erodes critical reasoning and kills human creativity slowly and systematically, where the “culture industry” is operated by a handful of powerful capital owners³².

In the view of Buddhism, placing awareness or decisions in surfing the internet is relevant to one of them, namely the concept of *sammā-vācā* (right speech). Speech in this context is translated into digital behaviour that is

²⁵ Surahman, S. (2024): (161).

²⁶ Ibid., p. 167.

²⁷ J. Mark G. Williams & Jon Kabat-Zinn (eds). (2011): (24).

²⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁰ Hardiman, F. B. (2021). Loc.Cit., p. 41.

³¹ Wattimena, R. A. A. (2023). Loc. Cit., p. 173.

³² Kumbara, Loc.Cit. (2023), p. 236 – 237.

exposed through comments, uploads, likes or dislikes, and so on. In essence, everything is returned to our conscious condition and choice in determining what we will do in the digital world; one important idea is to avoid deliberate lies³³ (*Itivuttaka* 25). Intentional lies reflect the slippery mind and speech that can be spiced with motivation and desire or ego interests in fulfilling one's existence. Intentional lies are also closely related to the phenomenon of hoaxes that are scattered on social media and have now interrupted the private realm, which contains hate speech, prejudice, distrust, and incitement. As gadget users, we are very easily caught up in becoming perpetrators of spreading fake news with certain interests. This interest is caused by cognitive bias and the worship of preferences, so it becomes the forerunner of fanaticism and the post-truth condition. Post-truth is used to process public sentiment for a certain political agenda and dulls critical thinking and sharpness.

Not only that, but the right speech (*sammā-vācā*) also contains meaning in words that do not cause unpleasant feelings³⁴ (*Theragāthā* 21) for others so that the decision to speak is a means of contemplating traps that could throw us into endless anxiety or discomfort. We need to reflect on our words to ensure they do not cause suffering or harm to others. Purification to be aware is also inseparable from realizing one's ignorance of something. By leaving behind nonsense or potentially divisive thoughts, they indirectly try to reconcile themselves and sow harmony in their hearts. This awareness also involves avoiding shallow thinking. This screen era can speculatively cause people to curse more easily because of the assumption that the fight is only in cyberspace, while the implications in the real world may not exist. They can reason more freely, feel less constrained, and express themselves more openly, which is known as the online disinhibition effect. However, this assumption cannot be justified if it is driven by the desire to harm or endanger others. Awareness of the consequences of violent speech is also important because, in today's digital era, this is due to digital traces that can backfire and turn against us at any time. The recorded digital traces are not easily deleted, let alone forgotten. At any time, it will be easily spread by people who are victims of our words because they involve sensitive matters such as rude comments, containing violence, or even insulting.

Wisdom certainly does not come from outside, not from others, but from oneself. Living consciously can begin by not easily making good or bad judgments about anything that happens, including shocking or sensational things in the digital world. We are aware of life in the present and try to control the fear and anxiety that arise due to the impact of thoughts about the future or fatal interruptions of the digital world. We must train ourselves not to depend

³³ "Right Speech: *samma vaca*", edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, accessed on [February 14, 2025] available at <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-vaca/index.html>.

³⁴ "Right Speech: *samma vaca*", edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, accessed on [February 14, 2025] available at <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-vaca/index.html>.

entirely on gadgets or even do digital ascetism as a possibility. We need to be aware of the fragility of the digital world, where many interests compete in digital discourse, so we need to try not to think too much about it. In the *Kalama Sutta*, the Buddha said that what we know is not beneficial and evil for us; we should leave, and conversely, what we know is good and valuable, and we accept and follow³⁵:

“Now, look you Kalamas, do not be led by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or speculative standpoints, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative views, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: ‘this is our teacher.’ But, O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome (*akusala*) and wrong and bad, then give them up... And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome (*kusala*) and good, then accept them and follow them.”

This context leads to the importance of managing what is beneficial and what is not. Realizing the ego trap in the glare of the digital world is a translation of efforts to grow awareness.

To realize the existing reality, we must at least have an altruistic attitude with sympathy and empathy. Altruistic actions direct love to all things surrounding us, like a loving mother caring for her child, so we are also urged to become individuals who can do the best and have unlimited compassion for ourselves to help fellow human beings. In the *Karaniya Metta Sutta*³⁶, the Buddha explains how we spread love to all life forms. Empathy and sympathy become feelings that grow to respect all forms of life (like the concept of *ahimsā*, which is interpreted as nonviolence). Recognizing this, we begin to learn the importance of navigating the endless flow of information. Realizing the potential for violence in the digital world, we must train our thoughts, words, and actions. All moral practices direct us to understand the nature of the central truth.

The practice of the concept of *metta* is an essential part of training and discipline. For example, we practice charity (*dana*), which leads us to empathize and try to identify self-feeling as an individual with others who are more in need. This is also called sensibility, which, in line with Levinas’ thought, is the basis and requirement for building ethical relations and becoming moral. Sensitivity allows humans to be ‘touched’ by things outside of them. Every human being has the same fears, anxieties, and fragility. Having inner peace is something that anyone can achieve. The idea of emancipation is that everyone can achieve enlightenment or have a good life. In *Dhammapada* 165³⁷, it is said that “By man himself evil is lost. Through his actions, he can also damage himself. If he does not do evil, he will cleanse himself, not others, meaning that purity and impurity are done by himself”. Buddhism views that the most

³⁵ Dharmasiri, Gunapala. (1992): (2).

³⁶ Ibid., p.21.

³⁷ Samaggi Phala. (2016). *Atta Vagga*. accessed on [February 22, 2025], available at <https://samaggi-phala.or.id/tipitaka/tanha-vagga/>.

valuable asset of humans is their ability to cultivate and maintain their minds to achieve wisdom.

With discipline and control, we will not give rise to “self-motivation,” but we will convert the traits surrounding *tanhā* that underlie immoral actions into traits that underlie our morals. Extinguishing desire in the context of releasing suffering will foster an ethical attitude towards life, such as compassion (*metta/maitri*), which hopes for happiness or well-being for all humans, compassion (*karunā*), which means eliminating the suffering of others and removing cruelty between humans, mutual respect (*muditā*) which can transcend envy and hatred and peace of mind (*upekkhā*) which is peace or the principle of neutrality (neither sad nor happy). Buddhism teaches us to see humans live with all its phenomena. Including liberation from worldly ties is humans’ effort without anyone’s help. Every human being has the power to become perfect or enlightened through meditation and self-control so that he can control or gradually eliminate the desire for self-interest (identification and possession (*asmi-māna* and *sakkyaditthi*), which is motivated by constant desire (*tanhā*) due to contact that produces sensual pleasure.

III. CONCLUSION

Talking about inner peace is important in this digital age. Complete involvement in the digital world has interrupted many aspects of life. The standardisation of the internet world, the lifestyle, and the flow of information are so dazzling that they lead to endless self-indulgence or the shallowing of the mind. Behind the dazzle and enjoyment, we try to desire it fully for the sake of existence or recognition. In this endeavour to desire, we also turn to anxiety or disappointment due to the massive changes in lifestyle standards, including the dynamic flow of information. The interruptions that occur turn into disasters that curb freedom. Moreover, the disaster of the post-truth world and fake news has turned humans in the digital world into brutes with hate speech, online violence, bullying, and various kinds. This is what drives the importance of understanding peace of heart, which in Buddhism is called mindfulness. Living mindfully can start by not easily making good or bad judgements to anything that happens, including things that are shocking or even sensational in the digital world.

It is important to place the consciousness of the perpetrator of the digital act as a user of the tool and maintain human dignity. Placing awareness also relates to *sammā-vācā* (right speech). In essence, everything is returned to our state of consciousness and choice in determining what we will do in the digital world, one of which is to avoid deliberate lies. Not only that, right speech (*sammā-vācā*) also implies words that do not cause unpleasant feelings for others. The purification of consciousness is also inseparable from realising one’s ignorance of something and spreading love to all life forms. Empathy and sympathy become feelings that grow to respect all forms of life (like the concept of *ahimsa*, which is interpreted as non-violence). Peace of heart is something that can be done by anyone. The idea of emancipation assumes that everyone can achieve enlightenment or have a good life.

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MOVING TOWARDS THE ENLIGHTENED WORLD

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Abstract:

Many people only focus on enjoyment when life is easy and pleasant. However, true growth comes from taking responsibility during difficult times. We must face both joy and adversity with courage, as doing so helps us cultivate wisdom and merit. In Buddhist teaching, while Buddhas and bodhisattvas offer guidance and protection, we are ultimately responsible for the results of our actions—good or bad. Karma, rooted in intention, governs the consequences of our deeds in body, speech, and mind. Actions such as killing, lying, or harboring greed and hatred bring about corresponding outcomes. We cannot shift this responsibility to others. Instead, we must acknowledge our faults honestly, accept the consequences, and learn from our mistakes. By doing so, we gain the respect and support of others and continue to grow. Avoiding blame, denying responsibility, or expecting others to intervene are futile, as the law of cause and effect still applies. The path to a meaningful and enlightened life requires personal accountability, resilience in the face of challenges, and the courage to correct our wrongs.

Keywords: *Karma, responsibility, Buddhist ethics, cause and effect, personal growth, accountability, wisdom, moral conduct, intention, enlightenment.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This world of ours is based on relationships between people. Hence, it is called the “human world.” Extending from our direct families to more distant relationships such as friends and people at work are all people we have affinities with. Within these interpersonal affinities, we find people who are willing to help us and also people who require our help. We find virtuous people, but we are also bound to find some who are ill-mannered. Simply, every person requires assistance of some kind at some point in their life. That is why people seek out mentors in hopes of finding help. So, who are our mentors? For

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example, people who help us find a job can be considered mentors. People who point out methods to success can be our mentors. People who help resolve our difficulties can also be mentors. But, in actuality, we do not need to go through painstaking efforts to seek outwards, for we are our closest mentors. So long as our character is wholesome, moral, benevolent, righteous, courteous, and patient, and we are willing to serve others while being diligent and frugal ourselves, people will naturally praise and accept us. In this way, are we not considered our mentors? On the other hand, if we conduct ourselves poorly - such as being erratic, ill-tempered, or unreasonable and refusing to with others- people will, of course, be reluctant to accept us. In this case, who would want to mentor us, even when we are looking for an adviser? It is not easy to find a mentor who can help us in this world. It requires several good causes and conditions to chance upon such a person. The best way is to start by changing ourselves. Be polite to people. Treat others with compassion and patience. Be willing to be at a disadvantage in dealing with interpersonal relationships. Be generous when praising others. Touch people's hearts. Given by serving and helping others. By being capable of the above, we will not only find mentors wherever we go, but we will become mentors to others as well.

To illustrate, a practitioner once asked, "We hold the chanting beads to chant 'Omitofo' (*Amitabha Buddha*).¹ Then what does *Amitabha* is one of the main *Buddhas* of *Mahayana Buddhism* and the most widely venerated Buddhist in Buddhism in East Asia². *Amitabha Buddha* chant when he holds the chanting beads?" *Amitabha Buddha* also chants "Omitofo." Why does he chant his name? Because it is better to rely on oneself than on others! Success does not fall from the sky, nor is it bestowed by anyone else. It is a result of perseverance and hard work. It is difficult to ask for help from people all the time, and praying to deities or *Buddhas* may not always be useful. Only by assuming responsibilities on our own and honing our abilities can we stand undeterred. Without this, no one, not even the *Buddha*-can help us. Therefore, we must be our mentors.

Thinking Outside the Box

Some people put themselves in a constant state of restlessness as they fight over benefits, opinions, positions, or power. Such a life is surely unhappy and not carefree. Realistically, nothing in this world is perfect; flaws are unavoidable. How does one lead a carefree and contented life in a world of dissatisfaction? Here are four suggestions:

1.1. Allow others to be right and be willing to be wrong

Disputes, arguments, and misunderstandings inevitably happen between people. Therefore, people must learn to resolve interpersonal problems in life.

Take the following story: One day, Mr. Shakya asked Miss. Boudh, "Why is it that our family always argues and is unable to enjoy a single moment of

¹ Williams (2008), p. 239.

² Williams (2008), p. 238.

peace, while your family is always harmonious and never seems to quarrel?” “That’s because your family is always right, and my family is always wrong,”³ answered Mr. Rahul. “What do you mean?” “Well, for example, if someone in your family breaks a bowl, they wouldn’t think it’s their fault. Instead, they would immediately blame others for misplacing the bowl. To which, others would reply, ‘You’re the one who’s careless and broke the bowl.’ This is why the arguments never stop. “My family is the exact opposite. Everyone openly admits their errors. The person who broke the bowl would immediately own up to the mistake, and the other person would also apologize for misplacing the bowl. Since everyone in my family admits they are in the wrong, naturally, we enjoy a harmonious relationship.” If everyone can be considerate and empathic by putting themselves in other people’s shoes, then conflicts and misunderstandings can be reconciled.

1.2. Allow others to be great and be willing to be small

A person gains the respect of others through virtue and an honorable reputation, not by conceit and vanity. In *Buddhism*, there is a *bodhisattva* named Sadaparibhuta⁴ or “Never Disparaging.” To all who looked down upon him, the *bodhisattva* would reply, “I dare not belittle any of you, for you are all future *Buddhas*.” By having this mentality of allowing others to be great and the willingness to be small, naturally, there will be no disputes. For instance, in the story of the five fingers who argued over who is the best, they had not anticipated the pinky to come out triumphant. Even though the pinky finger is the smallest, it is the closest to the *Buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* when a person joins their palms in respect. As can be seen, people who long for greatness may not always achieve it. People who think themselves insignificant are not necessarily so, for the most admirable people are those who are patient, tolerant, and magnanimous.

1.3. Allow others to have and be willing to go without

Numerous people hope to have more than others and do not care if they go without. However, being the only person to have something that nobody else has might incite jealousy and bitterness. How could that possibly be happy? To go “without” does not mean there is nothing. It means to be without limits, without measure, without exhaustibility, and bounds. In contrast, “having” something also means having limits, having measure, having an end, and having bounds. For instance, gold is fought over for its value, and hence, it is broken and melted down. Stones, on the other hand, remain intact as they are not as valuable. If we connect with the *Dhamma* in terms of spirituality and morality, we realize that the things that are more valuable in life are without shape and form. Value is not determined by something’s appearance but by how much it has meaning.

Anattā is a united Pali word consisting of an (not) and attā (self-existent

³ Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Buddha – Dharma pure and Simple*, part 3, March 2021,

⁴ Lotus Sutra Chapter 20 which describes the practices of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging.

essence).⁵

The term mentions the central Buddhist belief that no event has a permanent, unchanging “self” or element.⁶

1.4. Allow others to be happy and be willing to suffer

Seeking personal comfort and happiness at the expense of other people is the basis of worldly disputes. On the surface, those who give happiness to others may appear to be in positions of disadvantage. But in actuality, they are the ones who benefit. If we look at the world, there are numerous examples of people who can withstand the test of time like evergreen trees because of their ability to endure hardship. Conversely, short-sighted people who indulge in laxity, looking for quick fixes, are eliminated by the test of time because of an inability to handle changes that come their way. To build harmonious interpersonal relationships, it is crucial to allow others to be right and be willing to be wrong. Moreover, it is important to allow others to be great and be willing to be small. Allow others to have things and be willing to go without. Furthermore, it allow others to be happy and be willing to suffer. By doing so, even with differing opinions or methods of doing things, people will still be able to coexist in harmony and peace.

Duḥkha is a concept in Indian religions about the nature of transient phenomena that are innately “unpleasant”, “suffering”, “pain”, “sorrow”, “distress”, “grief,” or “misery”.⁷

II. FINDING PEACE AMIDST STRIFE AND DUHKHA

Ever since I saw a person became a monastic at a young age, I would always hear people say that “life is hard,” “life is a sea of *Duḥkha*,⁸” or “life is full of adversity.” In Buddhism, the notion of suffering can be divided into different types: the Two Sufferings, Three Sufferings, Four Sufferings, Eight Sufferings, and immeasurable suffering. This means that even though life may seem happy, the perception of happiness will still decay. In Buddhism, *passaddhi*⁹ represents to tranquility of the body, speech, thoughts, and consciousness on the path to enlightenment. I strongly disagree with such perspectives. Is suffering the only reason that people want to learn about Buddhism? Why would people come for suffering? Traditional Buddhists assert that the meaning of life is

⁵ Thomas William Rhys Davids; William Stede (1921). *Pali - English Dictionary*. Motilal Banarsidass. p. 22.

⁶ Gombrich, Richard Francis (2009). *What the Buddha thought*. Equinox Pub.p. 69 – 70.

⁷ Monier-Williams, Monier (1899), *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (PDF), London: Oxford University Press. p.483.

⁸ Nyanatiloka Thera 2004, p. 61: *dukkha* (1) “pain”, painful feeling, which may be bodily and mental [...] 2. “Suffering”

⁹ For instance, Rhys Davids & Stede (1921 - 25), p. 447, entries for “*Passaddhi*” (retrieved 9 Jul 2007) and “*Passambhati*” (retrieved 14 Jul 2007) etymologically derive both words from “*pa+śrambh.*” The past participle of *passambhati* is *passaddha* and the present participle is *pas-sambhayam*.

nothing but suffering, so one practices to eradicate suffering along with karmic obstructions. As a result, Buddhists tend to overemphasize the practice of austerities, causing daily life to be nothing but misery caused by both mental and physical suffering.

In my opinion, suffering cannot be explained solely from a negative perspective. Suffering also has a positive impact on people's lives. Personal growth comes from experiencing suffering; otherwise how can one become the best of the best without going through the worst of the worst? Without suffering and hardship, how can there be success?

Suffering and happiness are the same in essence. Yet, how can suffering be transformed into happiness? Understanding suffering allows one to transcend and overcome it and thus work towards peace and happiness. Happiness comes from the experience of suffering. For example, a plentiful harvest comes only through toiling in the fields. Gold needs to be painstakingly panned from a river. Business profits, salaries, and wages are earned through hard work. Without suffering, how could there be wealth and happiness? In this world, nothing can be gained without going through some degree of pain. Put differently, suffering is a form of education. For instance, children find studying to be a form of suffering, but such training is what develops knowledge. Children find chores troublesome, but it helps them foster diligence and determination, which will develop into beneficial lifetime habits. Suffering is a form of strength. The more a person can withstand hardship, the greater the happiness they will find. It can be likened to lifting weights some people find even twenty or thirty kilograms too heavy yet there are others who can easily lift fifty, or even a hundred kilograms. As such, life is a different experience for those unafraid to face suffering.

Suffering is a kind of sustenance. Without the trials of natural disasters, people would not know how to adapt to the changes in the environment. Without man-made calamities, people would not know how to prepare for adversity. Thus, suffering is essential in life. Suffering is a type of training. Many *Buddhist* practitioners purposely undergo austerities, using suffering to train themselves. Likewise, without training strenuously, how can athletes win gold at the Olympic Games?

Hunger and cold can be suffering. Being mistreated, blamed, and wrongfully accused are also suffering. Having the strength to bear these kinds of suffering allows one to prevail over and transcend them. In other words, by knowing what suffering is and wanting to end suffering, the strength and methods to alleviate it must then be found.

The notion that life is suffering must be changed, as it can heavily impact our success in life. Once, there was an old lady who always cried. When asked by a monastic why she was always crying, she replied, "You wouldn't understand. I have two daughters. The oldest is married to an umbrella maker, and the youngest is married to a noodle maker. On sunny days, all I think about is how hard life must be for my eldest daughter since no one buys umbrellas. And when it rains, all I think about is my youngest daughter, who won't be able to

dry noodles under the sun and sell them. I cry for them.” “Madam, don’t think that way! You can change your perspective on things,” said the monastic. “I can? How?” “From now on, whenever it’s raining, don’t think of your youngest daughter- instead, think of how many umbrellas your eldest is selling! When it’s sunny, think of the business your youngest daughter is making through drying and selling lots of noodles. If you change your perspective in this way, so too will your experience of suffering and happiness.” “Oh, change is possible!” said the old lady. In this way, the old lady changed her way of thinking and stopped crying. Instead, she beamed with happiness every day. She was happy for her eldest daughter when it rained and happy for her youngest one when it was sunny. No longer was she known as the “crying woman;” she was now the “smiling woman.”

I, likewise, would like to change the Buddhist perspective of agonizing over affliction and suffering. Life is short; a person can only experience so many springs and summers in one lifetime. We are not born into this world for suffering; we come into this world for joy and happiness.

Suffering is only temporary, not the total of life, in which joy and happiness are found. Thus, there is no need to fear suffering, for it is a positive factor in life. Those who recoil and retreat in the face of hardship will accomplish little; only those who are unafraid of suffering and adversity will truly succeed.

Suññatā (Emptiness)

*Suññatā*¹⁰ is also many times used to refer to a meditative state or experience. The concept of *śūnyatā* as “emptiness” is connected to the concept of *anatta* in early Buddhism.¹¹ While we all live with emptiness, yet most people do not understand what it means, and instead misbelieve it to be nihilistic, hopeless, and is without a future. Therefore, people dislike the idea emptiness, and sometimes even fear it. However, those who truly understand the *Dhamma* would know that only with emptiness can there be existence; without emptiness, nothing would come into being. For example, one’s pockets need to be empty in order to carry money in them. Bowls and containers need to be empty to be able to contain food and beverage in them. Plots of land need to be empty for houses to be built upon them. Houses need to be empty for people to live inside them. The body’s bowels, bladder, stomach, and intestines need to be empty – to have space in order for a person to stay alive.

Nothingness allows the world to be full of possibilities, for human life to be full of hope, and for the physical body to be fully functional. In everyday life, people squabble over empty space, and may even be involved in legal disputes over a few inches of land or a single wall. Yet, they are still fearful of being empty. In actuality, “emptiness” does not mean nothingness. Rather, it is what makes existence possible.

¹⁰ Monier-Williams, Sir Monier (1899). *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (2nd ed.). p. 1085.

¹¹ Sue Hamilton (2000). *Early Buddhism: A New Approach : the I of the Beholder*. Routledge. pp. 21 – 27.

Nothingness is not non-existence; it means to be “without” more specifically, to be without measure, without boundaries, without restrictions, or without end. The capacity of “emptiness” is one without limitations. This ancient *Buddhist* principle of “emptiness” has caused much misunderstanding in the *Buddha’s* teachings. Many would mistake the *Buddhist* teaching as the non-existence of things, such as the sky, earth, human beings, and the self. Hence, people are afraid to learn the *Dhamma*. The truth is, emptiness is the basis of existence; nothing can come into being without it. Emptiness is an important truth in life. What is it? How can it be understood? Take a table for example, when asked what it is, most people would say it is “a table.” But this is incorrect. How so? Is it not a table? In reality, a table is just its nominal form; its true form can be said to be wood. If the wood was assembled into the shape of a chair, it would no longer be called a table but a chair instead. Therefore, the table itself is only provisional. Upon examining its origin, one sees that it is wood now, to say it is wood is also incorrect, as this is also a nominal form. What then is its true form? Is it a tree? No, it is the result of a seed planted in soil and nourished by the combination of sunlight, air, water, and fertilizer—which, upon growing into a tree, has been processed into timber and made into a table. As such, the existence of this table arises from dependent origination; its true form is “emptiness.”

When I saw write the word “emptiness” in my One-Stroke Calligraphy, *Buddha’s* disciples would sometimes say, “Venerable Master, you should not write about ‘emptiness’ all the time, people do not like it?” To which, Venerable Master would respond, “emptiness is wealth, how can they dislike it? Nowadays an empty farming of land can cost millions!” emptiness is in fact extremely valuable and prized.

Venerable Master have also composed a couplet to further elaborate on the meaning of emptiness:

The empty nature of the Four Elements (*cattāro mahābhūtāni*)¹² manifests in existence;

The incorporation of the Five Aggregates (*Pañcupādānakkhandhā*)¹³ is not real either.

The Four Elements refer to Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind. Earth supports all beings, allows growth, and provides the necessities of life. Therefore, the Earth and the environment must be protected. Likewise, Water is vital – life is impossible without it. Where there is water, there is vegetation, on which animals depend for survival. Similarly, the element of Fire is found in sunlight and warmth, allowing the survival and maturation of all things in this world.

¹² Note that the Pāli word *dhātu* is used in multiple contexts in the Pāli canon. For instance, Bodhi (2000), pp. 527 – 8, identifies four different ways that *dhātu* is used including in terms of the “eighteen elements” and, as in this article, in terms of “the four primary elements.”

¹³ Steven M. Emmanuel (2015). *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*. John Wiley & Sons. pp. 193, 232 – 233, 421 – 425.

Lastly, Wind refers to air, a breath of it being the difference between life and death. Harmony of the Four Elements- earth, Water, Fire, and Wind – is what allows one to be robust and healthy so that life can be lived meaningfully. Therefore, it can be said that the Four Elements are both emptiness and existence. The second line of the couplet refers to the Five Aggregates of form (*rūpa*)¹⁴, feeling (*vedanā*)¹⁵, perception (*saññā*)¹⁶, mental formations (*sankhāra*)¹⁷, and consciousness (*viññāṇa*)¹⁸ - the five aspects that constitute the self, body, and mind. This means that a person's existence arises from the combination of causes and conditions; no one is an independent entity. Since existence comes from causes and conditions, it is inherently empty.

To say the “Four Elements are empty” also means the “Four Elements truly exist” it does not contradict the *Buddha's* teachings.

Why? Does not the combination of the Four Elements symbolize existence? Existence is emptiness, emptiness is existence. There is as it creates misconceptions and misunderstandings. It is better to comprehend the meaning of emptiness through existence.

In the *Buddha's* teachings, the concept of existence is sometimes mentioned before emptiness is brought up and at other times, emptiness before existence. Likewise, the concept of “non-duality of emptiness and existence” is sometimes presented, and at other times, it is “emptiness and existence are one.” To say that the “Four Elements are empty” is equal to saying the “Four Elements truly exist.” Emptiness and existence are like day and night or two sides of the same coin the two aspects are of the same essence that is inseparable.

Going beyond worldly pleasures

Religious teachers always maintain that human happiness does not depend upon the satisfaction of physical appetites and passions, or upon the acquisition of material wealth. This fact is also clear from empirical human experience. Even if we have all the worldly pleasures, we cannot still be happy and peaceful if our minds are constantly obsessed with anxiety and hatred, arising from ignorance with regard to the true nature of existence.

Genuine happiness cannot be defined in terms of wealth, power, children, fame or inventions. These are no doubt conducive to some temporary physical comfort but not to happiness in the ultimate sense. This is particularly so when

¹⁴ Steven M. Emmanuel (2015). *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*. John Wiley & Sons. pp. 587 – 588.

¹⁵ Harvey, Peter (2013), *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, 2nd Edition, p. 55.

¹⁶ Harvey, Peter (2013), *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, 2nd Edition, p. 56 – 57.

¹⁷ Harvey, Peter (2013), *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, 2nd Edition, p. 56 – 57.

¹⁸ Harvey, Peter (2013), *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, 2nd Edition, p. 56 – 57.

possessions are unjustly obtained or misappropriated. They become a source of pain, guilt and sorrow rather than happiness to the possessors.

Fascinating sights, enchanting music, fragrant scents, delicious tastes and enticing body contacts mislead and deceive us, only to make us slaves of worldly pleasures. While no one will deny that there is momentary happiness in the anticipation of as well as during the gratification of the senses, such pleasures are fleeting. When viewed in retrospection, a person can understand the fleeting and unsatisfactory nature of such pleasures, paving the way to a better understanding of this reality.

If material possessions are the precondition of happiness, then wealth and happiness would be synonymous. Is this a fact? A poet disagrees with this belief thus:

Can wealth give happiness? Look round and see
What gay distress! What splendid misery!
What fortune lavishly can pour.
The mind annihilates, and calls for more!”
Wealth cannot quench the burning thirst of craving.

We can never be happy if we merely seek to satisfy our gross animal desires (*Taṇhā*)¹⁹, to satisfy our need for the pleasures of food and sex. If it were so, then with the tremendous progress achieved in every field, the world could well be on the road to complete happiness. But this is obviously not the case. Worldly desires can never be entirely satisfied because the moment we obtain something we want, we soon become dissatisfied with it and crave for something else. When the changes and decay occur in the many things we cling to, we experience unhappiness. The enjoyment of sensual pleasure is not real happiness. True happiness can only arise from the full freedom of the mind. The source of happiness is not physical: it must be found in a mind free from mental disturbances.

Worldly treasures are impermanent (*anitya*)²⁰ but transcendental treasures like confidence, morality, generosity, honesty and wisdom are imperishable. Emotional attachment, hatred and jealousy debase a person; but goodwill, sympathetic joy and an unbiased attitude will make him noble, even divine in this life itself.

Man can develop and maintain his inner peace only by turning his thoughts inwards instead of outwards. Be aware of the dangers and pitfalls of the destructive forces of greed, hatred and delusion. Learn to cultivate and sustain the benevolent forces of kindness, love and harmony. The battleground is within us, and it is within us that the greatest battle has to be fought and won. The battle is not fought with weapons, but with mental awareness of all the negative and

¹⁹ Peter Harvey (1990). *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge University Press. p. 53.

²⁰ Richard Gombrich (2006). *Theravada Buddhism*. Routledge. p. 47.

positive forces within our minds. This awareness is the key to unlock the door from which conflict and strife as well as wholesome thoughts emerge.

The mind is the ultimate source of all happiness and misery. For there to be happiness in the world, the mind of the individual must first be at peace and happy. Individual happiness is conducive to the happiness of the society, while the happiness of society means happiness to the nation. It is on the happiness of nations that the happiness of the world is built.

From the lessons of life, it is clear that real victory is never gained by strife. Success is never achieved by conflict. Happiness is never experienced through ill-feeling. Peace is never achieved by accumulating more wealth or gaining worldly power. Peace is gained by letting go of our selfishness and helping the world with acts of love. Peace in the heart conquers all opposing forces. It also helps us maintain a healthy mind and live a rich and fulfilling life of happiness and contentment.

There was once a man who formed a religious cult and people regarded him as a very learned person. He had a few followers who recorded his instructions in a book. Over the years the book became voluminous with all sorts of instructions recorded therein. The followers were advised not to do anything without first consulting the holy book. Wherever the followers went and whatever they did, they would consult the book which served as the manual in guiding their lives. One day when the leader was crossing a timber bridge, he fell into the river. The followers were with him but none of them knew what to do under the circumstances. So they consulted the book.

“Help! Help!” the Master shouted, “I can’t swim.”

“Please wait a while Master. Please don’t get drowned,” they pleaded. “We are still searching in our holy book. There must be an instruction on what to do if you fell off from a wooden bridge into a river.”

While they were thus turning over the pages of the holy book in order to find out the appropriate instruction, the teacher disappeared in the water and drowned.

The important message of the story is that we should take the enlightened approach and not slavishly follow outdated conservative ideas, nor resort to any holy book without using our common sense. On the face of changing circumstances, new discoveries and knowledge, we must learn to adapt ourselves accordingly and respond to them by using them for the benefit of everybody.

Theravada Buddhist monk Dhammapala states that *paññā* has the attribute of penetrating the true nature of phenomena.²¹

Being good or doing good?

²¹ Dhammapala, Achariya (1996). *A treatise on the Paramis: from the commentary to the Cariyapitaka* (PDF). Translated by Bodhi, Bhikkhu. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society. pp. 5 – 6.

In the *Buddhist* belief, Karma can refer to a certain type of moral action that has moral consequences on the actor.²² In his book, *Buddhist Ethics*, Ven. Dr. H. Saddhatissa said, “Generally speaking, there are two ideas of morality: (i) to be good, and (ii) to do well. The first is real morality, whereas the second may be only a means to an end. One can be good to do well, but this is rare. People do good actions that appear entirely altruistic yet fundamentally are egoistic, motivated by acquisitiveness, desire for merit, bliss, heaven, and reward or motivated by fear of resulting punishment or hell. All so-called ‘good’ actions are inspired by selfishness, and to the *Buddhist*, the idea of ‘being’ good is the only true morality.”

It is glossed by the *Theravāda* Commentator *Dhammapāla* as “*santanam punāti visodheti*”, meaning ‘it cleans or purifies the life-continuity’.²³ The person who admits the evil deeds committed by him is at least better than the person who tries to justify his evil deeds, and who denies and pretends that he is innocent. Shakespeare expresses this beautifully when Lady Macbeth urges her husband before he kills the king to ‘be like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it. A person who is openly evil can at least be avoided, but the hypocrite’s evil intentions are not seen until it is too late.

What shall it profit a man, though he be rich, fortunate and enjoying all the rewards of the past good karma, when’ he is not virtuous, charitable and benevolent in this present life? He is like a man who lives on his capital, constantly drawing from his bank account of good karma but without replenishing it.

Dhamma is our home

When meeting people, we usually ask, “How should I call you? Where do you live?” So, where do people live today? In this human world, of course. But where in this world do people dwell? More often than not, in troubles and afflictions, and the illusions of wealth, romance, fame, and benefits. Like the blind wandering without a sense of direction, or a lone boat drifting aimlessly on the ocean, people are often unable to find a true place to abide. As such, life feels unsettling and sorrowful. This kind of life is bound to be frightening and filled with vexation. It can feel hopeless or futile. As can be seen, the brevity of human life is generally wasted on illusory afflictions. In *Buddhism*, there is an expression, “*Dhamma*”²⁴ abode,” which means to take the Dharma as one’s home. In other words, the *Buddha-Dhamma* provides a place for the body and mind one filled with peace, joy, and ease. If we can take the *Buddha*’s teachings as our home and abide in the truth, what is there to be afflicted about? For example, as taught by the *Buddha*, loving-kindness and compassion are without enemies. Would this not be peaceful and secure to abide in? Likewise, if we abide in joy and equanimity by serving others joyfully, people will naturally

²² Keown, Damien; *Buddhist Ethics A Very Short Introduction*, pg 5.

²³ Marasinghe, M. M. J. (2003), “*Puñña*”, in Malalasekera, GP; Weeraratne, WG (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, vol. 7, Sri Lanka: Government of Ceylon p.461

²⁴ <https://www.dhammadownload.com/viewtopic.php?t=41355>

accept us instead of excluding us no matter where we go. In this way, do we not foster affinities and find welcome everywhere? Similarly, when we abide in the Four Means of Embracing, Six Paramitas, the cultivations of Chan and Pure Land, as well as in the teachings of the *Buddha*, we are protected by the truth and guided by morality. When our lives are filled with loving-kindness and compassion, people know us to be kind-hearted. When we are joyful and Equanimeous, people hold us in good opinion. Moreover, when we can uphold and practice the Five Precepts and Ten Wholesome Deeds, we accumulate merits for a better future. Additionally, when we uphold the Six Paramitas the way of *bodhisattva* practice—we can liberate and awaken both self and others. We can also abide in the Ten Great Vows of *Samantabhadra* Bodhisattva from the *Avatamsaka Sutta*.²⁵ In the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Samantabhadra* is described at length in the epilogue, called the *Samantabhadra Meditation Sutra*, with special detail given to visualization of the bodhisattva, and the virtues of devotion to him. Or perhaps in the Ten Precepts as mentioned in the *Sutta* of Queen Srimala of the Lion's roar. In short, if we were to take all of these *Buddha's* teachings as our abode, they become the home in which we reside: joy without disaster or calamity, peace without fear or sorrow. Within this home, life is full of ease and liberation.

Auspiciousness

A Chinese saying goes, “All wholesome teachings in this world are delivered in *Buddhism*.” To name a few, the *Buddha* taught the Three *Dhamma* Seals, Four Noble Truths, Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, Noble Eightfold Path (*aṣṭasamyannmārga*),²⁶ Four Bases of Mindfulness (*sati*)²⁷, and Five Contemplations. All of these teachings serve as guidance on the ways of the world, the human mind, and life. In this way, we understand how to purify our thoughts and remove afflictions. We know how to resolve the problems we encounter. Moreover, we also recognize how to continuously develop and deepen our virtue, integrity, and wisdom – all of which lead to the perfection of life itself. The *Buddha's* guidance on the goals of life, his teachings on the ways of purifying the mind and eradicating afflictions, can be found throughout countless *suttas* and commentaries. This even includes how to inspire joy, faith, and betterment in others through uplifting words. For example, most people hope to have smooth, safe, and auspicious journeys in life. For this reason, the *Buddha* taught numerous ways on how to live an auspicious life in the *Maha Mangal Sutta*: stay clear of ignorant people and be acquainted with wise ones instead; to respect virtuous ones makes one the most auspicious.

²⁵ Hamar, Imre. *Buddhāvta aṃsakasūtra*, 2015, in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (Volume One), Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2 South Asia, Volume: 29 - 1.

²⁶ www.wisdomlib.org (5 July 2019). “Samyag-marga, Samyagmārga, Samyanc-marga: 2 definitions”. www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 24 July 2023. Retrieved 24 July 2023.

²⁷ *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*. Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, University of Chicago. Archived from the original on 2012-12-12.

To be dutiful to one's parents, and love as well as protect one's wife and children; to pursue a livelihood without inflicting harm on others makes one the most auspicious. Abstain from unwholesome actions, self-discipline, and refrain from drinking; to be steadfast makes one the most auspicious. To be respectful, humble, content, and grateful, to be able to instantly hear the *Dhamma* makes one the most auspicious. To lead a regulated and pure life, and realize the Eightfold Noble Paths; to attain nirvana makes one the most auspicious. To have a mind that remains unmoved by the Eight Winds, and to be free from worries and defilements; to remain tranquil and trouble-free makes one the most auspicious. Auspiciousness means to be without tragedy or disaster, with all moments and all conditions being favorable. Who would not wish for an auspicious life? This is reflected in the many words of blessing inspired from the *Buddhist suttas*, such as: "May you be auspicious for twelve periods a day, "May you be auspicious day and night," and "May everything be auspicious for you." In other words, when every hour and every minute in life is auspicious, calamities and afflictions do not arise. The ancient Indians measured time by dividing daytime into three periods: morning, midday, and afternoon. Similarly, they also divided nighttime into three periods: evening, late-night, and early morning. Together, these make up the time divisions of an entire day— hence the saying "auspiciousness across the six periods of the day." Put simply in modern terms, it means to have a prosperous, perfect, and peaceful day, in which all twenty-four hours are filled with joy and ease. Auspiciousness is something that is wished for by everyone. For instance, when ministers paid respect to the emperor during China's imperial era, they would also bid him, "Auspicious greetings!" In vernacular, it means "Good day!" If we can greet everyone we come across in this way, no matter friend or foe, then auspiciousness is bound to pervade all parts of the world. Lastly, auspiciousness also carries the meaning of being perfectly complete. Understanding this phrase to be a blessing and empowerment from the Buddha. The *Maṅgala Sutta* is a discourse (Pali: *sutta*) of Siddhartha *Gautama Buddha* on the subject of 'blessings'.²⁸ Furthermore, in face of today's turbulent society, I also advocate for "auspicious coexistence." As all forms of life on earth are interconnected, we need to learn to coexist with one another. Only in this way can auspiciousness and peace be achieved.

If interpersonal relationships are auspicious, then everyone would likewise be auspicious. And when all sentient beings in this world enjoy auspiciousness throughout all hours of the day, would it not mean that the *Buddha-Dhamma* has also pervaded our human world?

III. CONCLUSION

We as people yearn for a place to call home in this world. Yet, some vagrants wander their whole lives without knowing where their homes are.

²⁸ Rhys Davids & Stede (1921 - 25), p. 513, entry for "Mangala" (retrieved 08-28-2008 from "U. Chicago" at <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.2:1:3740.pali>) translates *mangala* as 'good omen, auspices, festivity.'

Some people's lives are full of uncertainty, not knowing what the future holds or where to go. For this reason, we proclaim to the world about the *Dhamma* abode the *Buddha-Dhamma* is where we should reside and our home sweet home. By taking the *Dhamma* as our abode, we will find ourselves more transcending, elevated, peaceful, and at ease. Wouldn't this be wonderful?

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THE EFFECT OF MINDFULNESS ON STRESS REDUCTION STUDENTS IN SEKOLAH TINGGI AGAMA BUDDHA NEGERI RADEN WIJAYA WONOGIRI INDONESIA

Erma Widyastuti*

Abstract:

The university period is an adaptation stage for students facing academic, social, and personal challenges. Academic pressures, social demands, and parental expectations can trigger academic stress, negatively affecting students' mental health, productivity, and life balance. One method that can be used to cope with stress is mindfulness, which is a mindfulness practice that focuses on awareness of thoughts and emotions without judgment. STABN (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri) Raden Wijaya Wonogiri, as a faith-based educational institution, has a unique academic environment where students are expected to excel academically and apply spiritual principles in their daily lives. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how mindfulness can help reduce academic stress among students. Mindfulness is efficacious in improving mental well-being, reducing anxiety, and improving focus and concentration. In addition to the psychological benefits, mindfulness also impacts the physiological aspects by lowering the levels of stress hormones such as cortisol. This study aims to review the literature on the impact of mindfulness on reducing student academic stress, especially at STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri. This literature analysis is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of mindfulness in dealing with academic stress and become a reference for educational institutions in designing mindfulness-based programs to help students manage stress better. In addition, this study can also be the basis for further research related to the application of mindfulness in various aspects of students' lives to improve their overall quality of life.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, students, stress, reduce.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The lecture period is the beginning of students' adaptation to changes in academic, social, and personal activities. During this period, students must face various challenges, such as developing academic abilities, managing time wisely, and balancing personal and social life. These demands cause students to experience academic stress.

Academic stress is something students at STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri often experience. Academic pressure, social demands, and parental expectations influence the stress level in the college environment. Students are usually faced with various educational and non-academic assignments, deadlines, and busy lecture schedules, and perform well academically and socially; changing the environment from home to the lecture environment can be a significant source of pressure. If left unchecked, this stress can harm students' academic performance, mental health, productivity, and physical well-being. Not infrequently, this poorly managed stress can cause various health problems, such as fatigue, sleep disorders, anxiety, laziness in activities, and depression. Therefore, multiple strategies to reduce stress are needed to maintain students' mental and physical health.

One of the methods commonly used to cope with stress is mindfulness. Mindfulness is also referred to as the practice of mindfulness practice and the process of observing the in-breath and out-breath (Sugata et al., 2022)¹. In practice, mindfulness involves focusing on thoughts and emotions. One of the goals of mindfulness practice is to improve students' ability to focus on their attention to stay calm and awake in any situation. Familiarising oneself with what it feels like to be more aware and improving the ability to maintain focus fully and control is this technique's most important part.

STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri is a religious-based higher education institution with a different academic environment. Students on campus are expected to excel academically and apply spiritual principles in their daily lives. However, it is important to understand how mindfulness can help STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri students reduce stress, as they face many challenges that can cause stress, both academically and socially.

Mindfulness has been widely researched in various populations, but research explicitly addresses its impact on college students' academic stress. Most studies have focused on the general or working population. However, those that specifically address its impact on university students have specific characteristics, such as facing increasing academic pressure and having different levels of responsibility to others. Consequently, a thorough analysis is required to understand how mindfulness can be best applied in these situations.

Various perspectives have shown that mindfulness positively impacts university students' mental and psychological health. Mindfulness helps

¹ Sugata, A., Gautama, S. A., Pramono, E., Burmansah, B., & Rapiadi, R. (2022). *Jurnal Agama Buddha dan Ilmu Pengetahuan*, 8 (2), 87 - 95.

reduce stress and enhances the ability to manage emotions, improve focus and concentration, and increase a sense of calm and comfort (Dika & Widyana, 2024) sedih, dan takut yang kurang terkendali. Emosi negatif ini membuat terjadinya peningkatan tekanan darah sehingga membutuhkan pengendalian diri yang benar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh pelatihan mindfulness terhadap penurunan emosi negatif pada penderita hipertensi. Metode yang digunakan yakni quasi-experimental design dengan bentuk equivalent control group design. Subjek dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 8 penderita hipertensi yang dibagi menjadi 2 kelompok, yaitu 4 subjek kelompok eksperimen dan 4 subjek kelompok kontrol. Teknik sampling yang digunakan berupa purposive sampling. Alat ukur untuk variabel emosi negatif adalah Negative Expressivity Scale (NES². In the academic context, mindfulness can help students cope well with academic pressure, improve their ability to manage emotions, and reduce excessive anxiety levels about assignment targets; thus, mindfulness can be an effective strategy for students to deal with various challenges they face during lectures.

In addition to its benefits to mental health and stress management, mindfulness has also been shown to impact a person's physiological aspects. Mindfulness can reduce the intensity of stress hormones such as 'cortisol,' reduce emotional tension, and increase responsiveness in the body (Robinson, 2024) thinking about, using, and regulating emotions. This construct has garnered considerable interest, but initial enthusiasm has faded and it is time to take stock. There is consensus that ability-related measures of emotional intelligence (EI³. Therefore, mindfulness is a very relevant method to be applied in the lives of university students to help them manage stress and maintain a balance of mental and physical health.

This study aims to gather literature on how mindfulness reduces academic stress in university students. To achieve this goal, it will analyze several relevant studies to find the mechanisms responsible for mindfulness's ability to reduce stress. This study's primary focus is mindfulness's effect on stress reduction in Stabn Raden Wijaya Wonogiri students. Students at this institute, like students in general, face various academic and social pressures that can impact stress levels.

Hopefully, this literature review will provide a deeper understanding of mindfulness's benefits for university students. It aims to emphasize how effective mindfulness is in reducing academic stress and provide guidance on how to do so. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be an important reference for policies in building a healthier and more supportive learning environment for students.

In addition, it also has the potential to provide insights for lecturers, educators, and others within the institution in designing mindfulness-based

² Dika, E. M., & Widyana, R. (2024). *Journal of Psychological Science and Profession*, 8 (2), 138 – 154. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jpsp.v8i2.53275>

³ Robinson, M. D. (2024). *Ability-Related Emotional Intelligence: An Introduction. Journal of Intelligence*, 12 (5).

programs that can help students cope effectively with academic stress. With a deeper understanding of the benefits of mindfulness, educational institutions can coordinate this practice with students' habits so that students can develop better stress management during the recovery period.

Furthermore, it can serve as a basis for research that focuses on applying mindfulness in various aspects of student life, not only in academic contexts but also in social and emotional life. With the increasing challenges students face in this modern era, a holistic and evidence-based approach such as mindfulness is becoming increasingly relevant in helping students achieve a better quality of life.

Thus, this research is expected to have a real impact on efforts to improve the quality of life of students, both mentally, emotionally, and academically. The conclusions obtained can later be used as a basis for designing educational policies that focus more on reducing stress in students and mental health so as to create a learning environment that is more supportive, inclusive, and able to support optimal student development.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

According to Creswell John, this research uses a literature study method to analyze the effect of mindfulness on reducing academic stress in STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri students. W. (Hasby Pembimbing & Hendriani dan Sri Indarti, 2017) workload and communication on performance. the study population was 58 nurses and all variables using the census work conflict, workload and communication as independent variables and the stress of nurses as the dependent variable. Methods of data analysis using multiple linear regression analysis aided by SPSS 20 for windows. This study concluded that labor conflicts, workload and communication positive and significant effect on nurse work stress. The coefficient of determination obtained nurse work stress 0,936, which means that the labor conflict, workload and communication have contributed influence on the dependent variable is equal to 93,6% while the remaining 6,4% is influenced by other variables not included in the regression model and also not inspected in the research results. Research that has been conducted in accordance with the regression test (t test, a literature review is a collection of articles from journals, books, and other documents that explain current theories and information and organize the literature into the necessary topics and documents⁴. (Marzali, 2017) literature review is a search and research by reading various books, journals, and other publications related to the research topic to produce writing regarding a particular topic or issue⁵. (Amarullah & Pendahuluan, 2023) defines literature review as a description or description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic, which provides a review of what has been discussed by other researchers or authors,

⁴ Hasby Pembimbing, M., & Hendriani dan Sri Indarti, S. (2017). *JOM Fekon* (Vol. 4, p. 2017).

⁵ Marzali, A.-. (2017). *etnosia. ETNOSIA: Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia*, 1(2), 27.

including theories, hypotheses, research problems, and methodologies used⁶.

This study's approach is descriptive qualitative, which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of mindfulness's effectiveness in reducing academic stress. Through this approach, the research focuses on extracting information from various sources to understand the relationship between mindfulness and academic stress and how this practice can be applied to students in faith-based universities.

The data used in this study were obtained from secondary sources, such as scientific journals, academic articles, books, and previous research reports that discuss mindfulness and academic stress management. Data collection was conducted by document analysis, which is tracing and reviewing relevant academic references. This process included a literature search, selection of references based on credibility and relevance, and identification of the main variables, namely academic stress and the effectiveness of mindfulness in managing stress.

Data analysis was conducted using meta-analysis and content analysis methods. Meta-analysis was used to compare results from previous studies to find patterns or trends that demonstrate the effectiveness of mindfulness in reducing academic stress. Meanwhile, content analysis aims to identify, classify, and interpret the main themes in the literature analyzed.

To ensure the accuracy of the research results, data validity was guaranteed through source triangulation, which is comparing information from various credible and academically tested references. In addition, the consistency of findings was considered by ensuring that the reviewed studies showed similar patterns regarding the benefits of mindfulness on academic stress reduction.

With this approach, the research is expected to provide in-depth insight into the benefits of mindfulness in helping students manage academic stress more effectively and provide a basis for educational institutions to design mindfulness-based programs. In conclusion, this research uses the literature study method to understand how mindfulness can reduce academic stress in STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri students. Several experts define literature review as collecting, analyzing, and organizing various relevant written sources.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1. Students

According to Sarwono, students are officially registered to participate in higher education, aged around 18 - 30 years, and are part of a community group with ties to higher education institutions (Murai, Shinji; Sonota, 1978). Students undergoing higher education aim to develop academic and professional competencies, leadership character, and social responsibility (Fitriana & Kurniasih, 2021)⁷. Students are prospective scholars who, through their involvement with higher education, are educated and expected to become

⁶ Amarullah, A, K., & Pendahuluan, A. (2023). Abstrak. 37 – 52.

⁷ Fitriana, A., & Kurniasih, N. (2021). *Jurnal Tawadhu*, 5 (1), 44 – 58.

intellectuals who benefit the wider community. (Ii et al., 2018)⁸. Students are prospective scholars who, through their involvement with universities (L. Sihombing, 2020)⁹. Students are the status carried by a person because of his relationship with higher education with the status of seeking knowledge, which is expected to become intellectual candidates. It can also be defined as students who study or study in higher education, be it universities, institutes, or academics.

It can be concluded that students are individuals who are officially enrolled in higher education, usually aged between 18 and 30, and have an attachment to higher education institutions. They undergo higher education to develop academic, professional, leadership, and social responsibility competencies.

Students can come from public, private, or other equivalent institutions. They are prospective scholars active in academic activities and expected to be part of the future intellectual generation. As knowledge seekers, students play an important role in developing insights and contributing to society.

3.2. Stress

According to experts, there are several definitions of stress, one of which is (Sudirman, 2019) stress is a state of physical and psychological distress. Stress is an internal or external response or process that reaches the level of physical and psychological tension to the limit of the subject's ability¹⁰. Stress is defined as the deterioration of emotional and physical conditions in life; it can be considered the body's response to life. In an increasingly complex modern life, humans will tend to experience stress if students are less able to adapt their desires to reality, both the reality that is inside and outside themselves; in simple terms, stress is a form of a person's response, both physically and mentally, to a change in their environment that is felt to interfere and cause them to be threatened (Sudirman, 2019)¹¹.

Stress is a situation that humans may experience in general, especially in students in organizations or universities. Stress is an important issue because this situation can affect student productivity and academic ability. Stress does not always have a negative impact; stress also has a positive impact, primarily if the stress can provide an input that has potential, such as personal motivation, stimulation to work harder, and increased inspiration for a better life.

Stress is a feeling of distress and mental strain. Low stress levels may be desirable, beneficial, and healthy (L. Nur & Mugi, 2021)¹². Physical symptoms usually appear in faster breathing, dry mouth and throat, sweaty hands, hot body, and tense muscles. In addition, stress can also cause digestive disorders such as diarrhea or constipation, body fatigue, headaches, and muscle twitching

⁸ Ii, B. A. B., Mahasiswa, A. P., & Mahasiswa, P. (2018).

⁹ Sihombing, L. (2020). *Jurnal Christian Humaniora*, 4 (1), 104–112.

¹⁰ Sudirman, S. A. (2019): *Jurnal Psikologi Islam*, 9 (1), 79 – 85.

¹¹ Sudirman, S. A. (2019): *Jurnal Psikologi Islam*, 9 (1), 79 – 85.

¹² Nur, L., & Mugi, H. (2021).. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen*, 18 (1), 20 – 30.

or spasms, especially in the eyelid area. People who experience stress also tend to feel restless for no apparent reason.

On the other hand, stress also affects a person's behavior, especially in social and family relationships. Harmony in the household, for example, is highly dependent on good communication between family members. (Juanda & Sjanette Eveline, 2018) Emphasizes that effective communication between husband and wife is vital to creating a harmonious family life¹³. Without good communication, misunderstandings and disputes are more likely to occur. The results show that poor communication in the family can lead to stress and depression in older family members. Poorly managed stress can worsen the quality of communication, creating a negative cycle that affects the well-being of all family (Barmawi et al., 2009)¹⁴.

3.3. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the capacity or skill of paying full attention (Brajadenta & Fachruddin, 2022)¹⁵. Mindfulness is the awareness arising from deliberate attention to present experiences without judgment (Dika & Widyana, 2024) sedih, dan takut yang kurang terkendali. Emosi negatif ini membuat terjadinya peningkatan tekanan darah sehingga membutuhkan pengendalian diri yang benar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh pelatihan mindfulness terhadap penurunan emosi negatif pada penderita hipertensi. Metode yang digunakan yakni quasi-experimental design dengan bentuk equivalent control group design. Subjek dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 8 penderita hipertensi yang dibagi menjadi 2 kelompok, yaitu 4 subjek kelompok eksperimen dan 4 subjek kelompok kontrol. Teknik sampling yang digunakan berupa purposive sampling. Alat ukur untuk variabel emosi negatif adalah Negative Expressivity Scale (NES)¹⁶. Mindfulness involves being aware of moment-to-moment experiences in a clear and balanced way. It means being open to the present moment's reality, allowing all thoughts, emotions, and sensations to enter consciousness without resistance or avoidance (Waney et al., 2020)¹⁷.

Mindfulness is a simple technique that can be done quickly. First, find a comfortable position so that the body is more relaxed. After that, inhale slowly, hold it to a count of six, then let it out slowly. Let the thoughts and emotions that arise just come without the need to fight or avoid them. Feel and accept them. Then, breathe in again, observing every breath of air that comes in and out, then release it slowly. By doing this, we can be more aware of ourselves, feel calmer, and better prepared to deal with various situations in daily life.

¹³ Juanda, & Sjanette Eveline. (2018). *Jurnal Kerusso*, 2 (1), 1 – 7.

¹⁴ Barmawi, S. R., Keperawatan, J., & Surakarta, U. M. (2009). *Jurnal Keperawatan Komunitas*, 1 – 8.

¹⁵ Brajadenta, G. S., & Fachruddin, D. (2022). *Jurnal Kedokteran Dan Kesehatan*, 7 (2).

¹⁶ Dika, E. M., & Widyana, R. (2024). *Journal of Psychological Science and Profession*, 8 (2), 138 – 154.

¹⁷ Waney, N. C., Kristinawati, W., & Setiawan, A. (2020): *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 22 (2), 73.

The practice of applying Mindfulness in the daily lives of students can help us in our efforts to reduce stress, help us to be more relaxed in the present moment, help us believe in ourselves more, and make our minds more focused. In another perspective, mindfulness can be defined as softening the heart by remembering Him (God) and being thoroughly grateful for being His student. An important part of the inner development taught by the Buddha is mindfulness (*sati*). This development aims to achieve happiness and relief from suffering (*dukkha*). According to the *Dīgha Nikāya*, mindfulness meditation (*sati*) plays a key role in developing concentration and mental stability. This is relevant in the modern context, where distractions from digital technology and academic demands often hamper students' ability to concentrate. Besides its practical benefits, mindfulness meditation has a strong Buddhist philosophical foundation. In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, mindfulness meditation is taught as the practice of paying attention to the body, feelings, thoughts, and phenomena with full awareness. This teaching reflects the relevance of mindfulness in building deep concentration and courage to face mental challenges. By integrating this approach into modern education, students gain academic benefits and the emotional balance needed to deal with the stresses of (Adhinugroho et al., 2025)¹⁸.

3.4. Mindfulness in University students

College students, as a population group facing high academic pressure, often experience stress that negatively impacts students' mental health. Various factors, including task load and performance pressure, trigger this stress. Stress in university students not only reduces academic productivity but also triggers various mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

Being a student is challenging, and academic demands often become a pressure. Many students feel overwhelmed by heavy course loads, piling assignments, and high expectations from family and society. In addition, competition in the academic environment increases the pressure to achieve and maintain good grades. Factors such as busy class schedules, assignments, and exams that require deep understanding and having to participate in groups or other activities can be sources of this academic pressure. For some students, this pressure is further increased when they have to work while studying or face family demands to graduate with high grades and get a good job.

Students' mental and physical health can be affected by academic pressure if not managed properly. As a result of the ever-increasing burden, many people experience stress, anxiety, sleep deprivation, and even fatigue. Some students also lose interest in studying and doubt their abilities. To cope with academic pressure, students must have skills in managing time, setting priorities, and understanding their limits. Seeking support and motivation from friends, lecturers, and significant others can also help. Students must balance personal and academic life to stay physically and mentally healthy during lectures.

¹⁸ Adhinugroho, S., Nyanasuryanadi, P., Sugata, A., Studi, P., Keagamaan, P., Tinggi, S., Agama, I., Boyolali, K., & Tengah, P. J. (2025). *Cendikia Cendikia*. 1206, 16 – 23.

According to Lusiane and Garvin (2019), education is the primary key to success¹⁹. Parents often have high expectations of their children, wanting high academic achievement and pursuing fields that are considered promising. These expectations can be motivating, but if they are too high and do not consider the child's abilities, they can cause tremendous pressure. Many children feel burdened by family expectations, especially compared to siblings, cousins, or peers who are perceived to be more successful (Lusiane & Garvin, 2019)²⁰.

The fear of disappointing parents or not being able to meet the standards set can lead to stress, excessive anxiety, and even loss of motivation. In some situations, meeting family expectations can also take its toll on students, causing them to become burnt out, lose confidence, or even drift away from the family due to parental demands. Therefore, it is imperative to have free and open communication with the family when facing these difficult situations. Parents can understand that valuing their child's potential and happiness is just as important as fulfilling other people's expectations. Stress and relationships can be reduced with better understanding between family members.

3.5. Time management

Time management (life management) involves achieving life's main goals by setting aside meaningless activities that often take up a lot of time (Kusnul Ika).²¹ (Carolus Borromeus Mulyatno, 2022) He wrote that time management is an effort made by everyone to use time as much as possible to achieve planned goals so that the efforts made by a person can be successful and provide benefits for himself²². Research shows that effective time management can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of individuals in carrying out daily tasks. Working in a systematic and scheduled manner helps avoid wasting time and increases productivity (Efektif, 2021)²³. Time management is optimizing optimal time through organized and mature planning of activities (Carolus Borromeus Mulyatno, 2022)²⁴.

With a busy class schedule, piles of assignments, and organizational activities or side jobs, students need to manage their time well so as not to be overwhelmed. Lack of effective time management often leads to stress, anxiety, and even burnout.

Students often face challenges in managing their time, such as procrastination, lack of planning, and difficulty prioritizing. Many are accustomed to working at the last minute before deadlines, which increases mental stress and decreases the quality of their work. In addition, involvement

¹⁹ Lusiane, L., & Garvin. (2019). *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi MIND SET*, 9 (01), 60 – 77. <https://doi.org/10.35814/mindset.v9i01.726>

²⁰ Lusiane, L., & Garvin. (2019). *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi MIND SET*, 9 (01), 60 – 77.

²¹ Kusnul Ika Sandra, & M. As'ad Djalali. (2023). *Jurnal Psikologi Indonesia*, 2 (3), 217 – 222.

²² Carolus Borromeus Mulyatno. (2022). *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 4, 1349 – 1358.

²³ Efektif, E. D. A. N. (2021). *TIME MANAGEMENT*.

²⁴ Carolus Borromeus Mulyatno. (2022). *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 4, 1349 – 1358.

in organizations or social activities can take up much time if not managed well.

To overcome this problem, students can apply various effective time management strategies. Creating a structured schedule by recording daily and weekly activities can help us as students allocate our time more efficiently. Techniques such as Pomodoro can improve focus and avoid boredom while studying. Prioritizing based on urgency and importance is also important in ensuring that the most pressing tasks are done first (Akbar & Margaretha, 2024)²⁵.

In addition, maintaining a balance between academic and personal life should not be ignored. Students need to take time to rest, socialize, and maintain physical and mental health. With discipline and good planning, students can manage their time effectively, increase productivity, and live a balanced and comfortable college life.

3.6. Social environment

(Kamaluddin & Junaidin, 2024) Based on the literature, stress in college students not only reduces academic productivity but also triggers various mental health problems such as anxiety and depression²⁶. Mindfulness comes as a psychological intervention that helps students manage stress better.

Targeted research shows that mindfulness exercises, such as breathing meditation and body scans, help students increase awareness of feelings and thoughts without pressure (Hidayat & Fourianalistyawati, 2017)²⁷. Thus, mindfulness provides emotional distance between students and the stress they feel so that they can better deal with it rationally and effectively. This result aligns with the findings of (M. Sihombing et al., 2024) who mentioned that mindfulness helps individuals deal with stressful situations more consciously and without reacting automatically²⁸. Mindfulness is a psychological method that helps students in managing academic stress better. The pressure of university life often has an impact on mental health, such as anxiety and depression, which in turn can reduce academic productivity. Through breathing meditation and body scan exercises, students can increase awareness of their thoughts and feelings without being overwhelmed by pressure. Thus, they can face academic challenges more rationally and calmly. In addition, mindfulness also helps to create emotional distance from stress so that students do not react impulsively in the face of academic and personal life pressures.

²⁵ Akbar, M. C., & Margaretha, S. (2024). *Jurnal Ekonomi Revolusioner KESEIMBANGAN KEHIDUPAN KERJA DAN KEHIDUPAN PRIBADI : MANAJEMEN WAKTU SEBAGAI KUNCI UTAMA*. 7 (6), 163 – 170.

²⁶ Kamaluddin, K., & Junaidin, J. (2024). *Jurnal Syntax Imperatif: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan*, 4 (6), 811 – 820.

²⁷ Hidayat, O., & Fourianalistyawati, E. (2017). *Jurnal Psikogenesis*, 5 (1), 52 – 57.

²⁸ Sihombing, M., Akademik, S., & Psikologis, K. (2024). *MINDFULNESS*. 7, 15062 – 15067.

In addition to mindfulness, the social environment also plays an important role in students' psychological well-being. The social environment includes interactions with family and friends; the academic environment can provide emotional support or be a pressure source. The influence of this environment is very significant and is characterized by the motivation, expectations, and level of social support students receive. A supportive environment can strengthen the effectiveness of mindfulness in managing stress, while a stressful environment can worsen one's psychological state.

By understanding the role of mindfulness and the social environment, students can more easily adjust to academic pressure. Mindfulness helps reduce stress and encourages individuals to be more mindful in facing challenges without overreacting. With consistent practice and positive social support, students can achieve a balance between academic and personal life and take better care of their mental health.

3.7. Effectiveness of mindfulness to reduce academic stress

Various studies document the benefits of mindfulness in the context of higher education. A study (Candrawati et al., 2020) showed that university students who practiced mindfulness for several weeks significantly reduced academic and non-academic stress levels compared to controls who did not undergo mindfulness interventions²⁹. In this study, students reported an increased ability to cope with task and deadline stress, feel calm, and concentrate on academic pressures.

Furthermore (Romadlon, 2020) also showed similar results in students who participated in an 8-week mindfulness training program, which noted reduced stress, fear, and fatigue³⁰. In his research, Creswell explained that mindfulness helps students deal with stress more consciously and not react impulsively to better cope with academic pressure with more adaptive (Salwa Tadzkirotul Aula et al., 2024)³¹ challenges in its application among university students. One of the main challenges is consistent practice (Zuo et al., 2023)³².

Mindfulness has significantly benefited university students in managing academic and non-academic stress. Based on various studies, students who regularly practice mindfulness show a greater stress reduction than those who do not undergo this intervention. A study by (Candrawati et al., 2020) revealed that mindfulness helps students deal with deadlines and academic pressure

²⁹ Candrawati, S. A. K., Sukraandini, N. K., & Subhaktiyasa, P. G. (2020). *The Effect of Mindfulness Therapy on students anxiety in process of conducting research paper at the Institute of Health Science Wira Medika Bali*. *Healthy-Mu Journal*, 4 (1), 43.

³⁰ Romadlon, F. (2020). *COVID-19 Dalam Ragam Tinjauan Perspektif*. In *COVID-19 Dalam Ragam Tinjauan Perspektif*.

³¹ Salwa Tadzkirotul Aula, Rachil Najma Shifa, & Dewi Khurun Aini. (2024). *Jurnal Publikasi Ilmu Psikologi*, 2 (3), 91 – 113. <https://doi.org/10.61132/observasi.v2i3.467>

³² Zuo, X., Tang, Y., Chen, Y., & Zhou, Z. (2023). *The efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions on mental health among university students: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11(November), 1 – 14.

more calmly and improves concentration³³. Another study (Romadlon, 2020) supported these findings, showing that an eight-week mindfulness training program effectively reduced stress, fear, and fatigue³⁴.

Furthermore, Creswell, in a study cited by (Salwa Tadzkirotul Aula et al., 2024) explained that mindfulness allows students to deal with stress more consciously and not react impulsively³⁵. This makes them better able to manage academic pressure with more adaptive strategies. However, despite its clear benefits, the biggest challenge in implementing mindfulness is consistency in practice. As mentioned by (Zuo et al., 2023), many college students struggle to maintain a practice routine due to busy academics and lack of motivation³⁶.

So, how effective is mindfulness for university students? If applied consistently, mindfulness can be a very effective tool in improving students' mental resilience and psychological well-being. However, without continuous practice, the benefits may diminish. Therefore, support from educational institutions, such as structured training or integration of mindfulness in the curriculum, can help students more easily adopt this habit in their daily lives.

3.8. Mindfulness and students' psychological well-being

Mindfulness habits reduce stress and improve psychological well-being (Muzzamil et al., 2024)³⁷. The reviewed study found that college students who practiced mindfulness experienced lower levels of anxiety and depression compared to students who did not practice mindfulness. This is due to the ability to help college students let go of negative thought patterns, which often exacerbate stress, by becoming self-aware. Mindfulness helps college students be more present at the moment, reduce rumination, and become better equipped to deal with difficult situations.

In addition, this research has shown that students who regularly practice mindfulness tend to have greater self-compassion (Istiqomah & Salma, 2020)³⁸. Self-compassion, also known as self-compassion, is essential to helping students accept academic failures or difficulties well without feeling too much pressure. A study by (Neff & Dahm, 2015) showed that students

³³ Candrawati, S. A. K., Sukraandini, N. K., & Subhaktiyasa, P. G. (2020). *The Effect of Mindfulness Therapy on students anxiety in process of conducting research paper at the Institute of Health Science Wira Medika Bali*. *Healthy-Mu Journal*, 4(1), 43.

³⁴ Romadlon, F. (2020). *COVID-19 Dalam Ragam Tinjauan Perspektif*. In *COVID-19 Dalam Ragam Tinjauan Perspektif*.

³⁵ Salwa Tadzkirotul Aula, Rachil Najma Shifa, & Dewi Khurun Aini. (2024). *Analisis Strategi Management Waktu dalam Meningkatkan Produktivitas Belajar Untuk Menghindari Stress Akademik Pada Mahasiswa*. *Observasi : Jurnal Publikasi Ilmu Psikologi*, 2 (3), 91 – 113. 7

³⁶ Zuo, X., Tang, Y., Chen, Y., & Zhou, Z. (2023). *The efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions on mental health among university students: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11 (November), 1 – 14.

³⁷ Muzzamil, F., Psi, S., & Psi, M. (2024). *Self-Care Membantu Kesehatan Mental Individu*. 2(10), 780–786.

³⁸ Istiqomah, S., & Salma, S. (2020). *Jurnal EMPATI*, 8 (4), 781 – 786.

who practice mindfulness can handle academic challenges more emotionally healthier and reduce stress levels³⁹.

According to (Komaruddin et al., 2023), student psychology studies individuals' psychological changes and development during their lives as students, including how they manage stress, emotions, and academic demands⁴⁰. Students are in the early adult stage of development, where they experience various challenges in adjusting to the academic and social environment.

(R. R. Nur et al., 2023) explained that university students are at an advanced stage of cognitive development, where they begin to think more abstractly, critically, and reflectively⁴¹. In addition, the college experience helps them form their self-identity and determine their life goals.

Challenges in Mindfulness Implementation among College Students

Although many studies have shown the benefits of mindfulness, some studies have also highlighted challenges in its implementation among university students. One of the main challenges is consistent practice (M. Sihombing et al., 2024)⁴². Most students who participated in mindfulness programs reported difficulties maintaining the practice amidst their busy academic schedules. Other studies also highlighted that the duration of the mindfulness program affects the results achieved. Mindfulness at STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya: Building Awareness, Calmness, and Balance in Academic Life

Mindfulness, or mindfulness, is a practice that aims to train the mind to focus on the present moment by accepting all experiences without judgment. In a stressful and demanding academic world, STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya is taking innovative steps by implementing various mindfulness methods to help students and academicians achieve emotional balance, improve focus, and reduce stress levels that often arise from academic routines. One of the main approaches implemented on campus is the Mindfulness Bell, a simple practice that profoundly impacts mindfulness and mental health.

3.9. Benefits of the mindfulness bell for students and the academic community

The Mindfulness Bell is implemented regularly every Monday to Friday at 08.00 WIB, 12.00 WIB, and 15.30 WIB. Students, lecturers, and academic staff are encouraged to stop their activities momentarily and become mindful when the bell rings.

³⁹ Neff, K. D., & Dahm, K. A. (2015). *Handbook of Mindfulness and Self-Regulation*, 121 –140.

⁴⁰ Komaruddin, Jannati, Z., & Herwantoro. (2023). *Ghaidan Analisis Konseptual Mengenai Mental Hygiene dalam Perspektif*. 6 (2), 88 – 95.

⁴¹ Nur, R. R., Latipah, E., & Izzah, I. (2023). *Perkembangan Kognitif Mahasiswa pada Masa Dewasa Awal*. *Arzusin*, 3 (3), 211 – 219

⁴² Sihombing, M., Akademik, S., & Psikologis, K. (2024). *MINDFULNESS*. 7, 15062 – 15067.

Several steps must be followed in this practice. Stopping Activities While either in a sitting or standing position, individuals are asked to stop all forms of activity, be it reading, writing, talking, or using electronic devices. This cessation of activity aims to free the mind from constant academic pressure.

Listening to the Bell with Mindfulness. The sound of the bell is a tool to trigger awareness. Students and academicians are expected to hear and realize the sound of the bell without letting their minds drift into the past or the future. After stopping the activity and listening to the sound of the bell, individuals are directed to focus on their natural breathing. Awareness of each inhalation and exhalation can calm the mind, reduce tension, and improve emotional balance.

Participants may close their eyes entirely or lower their gaze about 45° downwards to aid concentration. This aims to reduce external distractions and increase self-awareness. After the bell rings for the third time, individuals can resume activities with a fresher, calmer, and more attentive mental state. This practice helps to increase productivity and reduce stress that may arise during work or study. The Mindfulness Bell is a daily ritual and a strategy that has various benefits for academicians' mental and emotional well-being. By taking a moment to stop and breathe mindfully, students can reduce the anxiety that often comes with academic pressures, assignments, and exams. This practice helps train the brain to focus more on one thing at a time, improving the quality of learning and understanding of course material.

By increasing awareness of thoughts and feelings, students can develop more mindful ways of responding to challenging situations or stressors in everyday life. A clearer and calmer mind allows individuals to work more effectively without being distracted by unnecessary anxiety or pressure. By being more aware of their feelings, students can also improve the quality of their communication and relationships with others, including fellow students, lecturers, and academic staff.

According to, students who practice mindfulness can better face academic challenges with a healthier emotional approach, thus reducing excessive stress. Mindfulness also plays a role in increasing students' mental toughness⁴³. With mindfulness practice, individuals can develop the ability to remain calm and focused in the face of academic and social pressures (Ghozali, 2023)⁴⁴.

The impact of mindfulness practice on college students is significant. According to, students who practice mindfulness can better face academic challenges with a healthier emotional approach to reduce excessive stress⁴⁵. In addition, mindfulness also plays a role in increasing mental toughness. (Ghozali, 2023) added that by practicing mindfulness, students could develop

⁴³ Neff, K. D., & Dahm, K. A. (2015). *Handbook of Mindfulness and Self-Regulation*, 121–140.

⁴⁴ Ghozali, M. A. (2023) : *Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 10 (03), 460 – 470.

⁴⁵ Neff, K. D., & Dahm, K. A. (2015). *Self-compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness. Handbook of Mindfulness and Self-Regulation*, 121 – 140.

the ability to remain calm and focused despite facing heavy academic and social pressures⁴⁶. Practicing mindfulness helps manage stress and strengthens the mentality to be better prepared to face all challenges in their academic and social life.

Besides implementing the Mindfulness Bell, STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya has also developed various other methods to promote mindfulness. Specific courses adopt mindfulness sessions at the beginning or end of class to help students focus and absorb the material better. The campus regularly organizes mindfulness training and seminars for students and lecturers to introduce basic meditation and mindfulness techniques. STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya provides a unique space for students to meditate, reflect, or simply calm their minds after a busy day. The campus also utilizes technology such as meditation apps and mindfulness guide recordings that students can use to practice independently.

Implementing Mindfulness Bell and other mindfulness initiatives at STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya is a strategic step in creating a healthier, more harmonious, and mindful academic environment. By getting used to pausing, listening, breathing, and resuming activities calmly, students and academic staff can experience positive changes in various aspects of life.

This practice provides short-term benefits in academic life and equips individuals with essential skills to face future challenges more thoughtfully, mindfully, and without excessive stress. By continuously developing mindfulness in every step of life, college students become more academically, mentally, and emotionally prosperous daily (Putri et al., 2024)⁴⁷.

IV. CONCLUSION

Students face various challenges in academic life, such as high academic demands, family expectations, suboptimal time management, and social pressure. These factors are often triggers for stress that can harm mental and physical health. If not handled properly, academic stress can lead to anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, fatigue, and even decreased productivity. Therefore, the right strategies are needed so that students can manage their stress well, stay focused, and live a balanced academic life. One method that has proven effective in reducing stress is mindfulness. This practice helps students increase awareness of themselves and their surroundings to better understand and manage their emotions without acting impulsively. In addition, mindfulness contributes to a more positive mindset, making students less susceptible to academic pressure. Another benefit of mindfulness is its physiological effects, such as lowering hormone levels (cortisol), reducing muscle tension, and improving sleep quality.

⁴⁶ Ghozali, M. A. (2023) : *Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 10 (03), 460 – 470.

⁴⁷ Putri, R., Mariyatul, S., Amalia, N., & Janvierna, M. F. (2024). *Efektivitas Mindful Education dalam Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Mental , Prestasi Akademik , dan Keterampilan Sosial Siswa*. 4 (2), 66 – 72.

Research shows that students who regularly practice mindfulness tend to experience reduced anxiety and depression compared to those who do not. Mindfulness helps them overcome negative thought patterns and focus more on solving problems constructively. Thus, students can face various academic challenges more calmly and rationally.

From exploring various studies, it is clear that mindfulness has excellent potential to help STABN Raden Wijaya students overcome stress due to college. These studies agree that regular mindfulness practice can reduce stress, calm the mind, and help students focus on learning. One of the mindfulness methods implemented at STABN Raden Wijaya is the mindfulness Bell, which invites students to pause from their activities several times a day to do self-reflection and breathing exercises. This practice helps students achieve mental stability and improve focus in completing academic tasks. In addition, educational institutions are also integrating mindfulness into various aspects of academic life through mindfulness training and the provision of dedicated meditation spaces.

Mindfulness also has a positive impact on students' social relationships. With increased self-awareness and empathy, students become more sensitive to the feelings of others, establishing more harmonious interpersonal relationships. In addition, mindfulness helps students accept academic failures more gracefully and reduces the pressure of excessive social expectations.

In addition to the psychological and social benefits, mindfulness improves students' academic performance. With consistent mindfulness practice, students can manage their time well, improve concentration in learning, and absorb information more effectively. Thus, they can face exams and academic assignments more confidently and calmly.

While mindfulness has proven beneficial, some obstacles still exist to its adoption among university students. One of the main challenges is the lack of consistency in practice. Many students struggle to maintain a regular mindfulness practice due to academic commitments. In addition, the lack of understanding about mindfulness hinders its effectiveness in managing stress. Therefore, further efforts are needed to raise awareness of the benefits of mindfulness and provide more structured programs in academic settings.

This study recommends that mindfulness be widely integrated with higher education curricula as part of stress management strategies. Educational institutions can provide regular mindfulness training and make it part of daily academic life. In addition, students are encouraged to apply mindfulness more broadly in their lives, not only in academic contexts but also in social interactions and personal well-being.

In addition to organising mindfulness training on campus, universities can also work with mental health professionals to guide students in managing stress more effectively. Seminars and workshops on mindfulness can be a strategic step to raise awareness of the importance of mental health among students.

But keep in mind that everyone is different. Some feel the benefits

immediately, while others take longer. Factors such as how often to practice and the character of each student also matter. So, further research is needed to find the best way to apply mindfulness to be truly effective for all students in various conditions.

In the future, this research could focus on how to tailor mindfulness programs to the specific needs of students, especially at STABN Raden Wijaya, which has distinctive religious values. For example, it can be done considering different cultural backgrounds or stress levels. In addition, it is also important to look at the long-term effects of mindfulness on students' mental health and overall well-being. With a deeper understanding, we can maximize the potential of mindfulness to create a campus environment that is more supportive and conducive to student development.

Mindfulness is an easy-to-implement and effective method for helping students deal with academic stress. By making it a habit to be more fully aware of present-moment experiences, students can reduce stress, improve their well-being, and achieve balance in their academic and personal lives. Therefore, applying mindfulness in the academic environment is highly recommended to improve students' quality of life and help them achieve their full academic potential.

With consistent mindfulness applications, students can also develop stress management skills that will benefit them during their university years and future lives. With full awareness of emotions, thoughts, and actions, students can become more resilient individuals better prepared to face life's challenges. Therefore, the development of mindfulness programs in academic settings should continue to be encouraged so that more students can feel the benefits in the future.

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THE THERAPEUTIC IMPACT OF BUDDHA PAINTINGS: EXPLORING INNER PEACE, POSITIVITY, AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract:

Buddha paintings are powerful visual tools that promote mindfulness, emotional balance, and inner peace. Beyond aesthetics, they support psychological healing by reducing stress and anxiety through symbolic elements like the lotus, mudras, and halos. These paintings play a therapeutic role in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and emotional regulation. Neuroaesthetic research shows that such serene imagery activates brain regions linked to calmness and emotional stability. Their tranquil colors and composition make them ideal for therapy rooms, meditation spaces, and wellness centers.

Buddha paintings aid in visual meditation, lowering cortisol levels and stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system. They reinforce positive emotions like compassion, gratitude, and self-awareness, helping reduce anxiety and depression. Scientific evidence supports their mental health benefits, especially in stress relief and mindfulness cultivation. Future research should include fMRI and EEG studies to further assess their neuropsychological effects and ethical integration in trauma therapy. When used respectfully, Buddha paintings offer a holistic, non-invasive approach to enhancing well-being in modern therapeutic practices.

Keywords: *Buddha art, mindfulness, stress relief, neuroaesthetics, emotional healing.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background on Buddhist art and its significance in spiritual traditions

Buddhist art has played a profound role in spiritual traditions across centuries, serving as a medium for conveying religious narratives, values, and meditative practices. Originating in the 3rd century BCE, Buddhist art spans various forms, including sculptures, murals, and paintings, each symbolizing different aspects of Buddhist teachings¹ (Huntington, 2013). Central to Buddhist artistic expression is the representation of the Buddha, often depicted in serene and meditative postures, embodying enlightenment, peace, and transcendence² (Snellgrove, 2018). These artistic renditions are not merely decorative but serve as aids to meditation, guiding practitioners towards mindfulness and inner tranquility. The symbolism in Buddhist paintings – such as the lotus flower signifying purity, the dharmachakra representing the cycle of life, and the mudras (hand gestures) indicating different states of consciousness – further reinforces their spiritual significance³ (Coomaraswamy, 2015).

1.2. Importance of visual art in psychological well-being

Art has long been recognized for its psychological and therapeutic benefits. The field of art therapy explores how creative expression can alleviate stress, improve mood, and enhance cognitive function⁴ (Malchiodi, 2012). Visual art, particularly religious and spiritual imagery, has been linked to reduced anxiety, increased emotional resilience, and enhanced overall well-being⁵ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). Buddhist paintings, with their intricate designs and calming color palettes, serve as tools for meditation and self-reflection, promoting a sense of peace and emotional balance⁶ (Kapitan, 2018). The meditative quality of Buddhist art allows individuals to connect deeply with their emotions, fostering mindfulness and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety⁷ (Goleman, 2003).

1.3. Purpose of the study

This study aims to explore the therapeutic benefits of Buddha paintings in fostering inner peace, positivity, and mental health. By examining the

¹ Huntington, J. C. (2013). *The art of Buddhism: An introduction to its history and meaning*. Shambhala Publications.

² Snellgrove, D. (2018). Buddhism and Buddhist art in the context of the Buddhist world. In K. G. Jones (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to Buddhist philosophy* (pp. 455 - 468). Routledge.

³ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (2015). The symbolism of the lotus in Buddhist art. *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, 24 (2), 99 – 104.

⁴ Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). *Art therapy and health care*. Guilford Press.

⁵ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁶ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. *Art Therapy*, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

⁷ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

psychological impact of engaging with Buddhist art, this research seeks to establish its relevance as a non-invasive, holistic intervention for stress relief and emotional well-being. The study will investigate how exposure to Buddha paintings influences an individual's emotional state, stress levels, and mindfulness, contributing to broader discussions on art therapy and mental health.⁸ (Chilton et al., 2015).

1.4. Research objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To examine the psychological impact of Buddhist paintings on emotional well-being.
- To analyze the role of Buddha paintings in promoting mindfulness and stress reduction.
- To explore the cognitive and affective responses elicited by visual exposure to Buddhist art.
- To evaluate the potential of Buddhist paintings as a therapeutic tool in mental health interventions.

By addressing these objectives, this research will contribute to the growing body of literature on the intersection of art, spirituality, and psychology, offering insights into the use of Buddhist art as a means of promoting mental health and emotional resilience.

II. THE SYMBOLISM OF BUDDHA PAINTINGS

2.1. Historical and cultural significance of Buddha imagery

Buddha imagery has a rich historical and cultural heritage rooted in the Buddhist spiritual tradition. The first depictions of the Buddha in visual form appeared in the 3rd century BCE, under the reign of King Ashoka, as part of a broader movement to propagate Buddhist teachings across the Indian subcontinent⁹ (Huntington, 2013). These early representations were symbolic, avoiding human form in favor of symbols like the wheel (Dharmachakra), footprints, and the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, signifying the Buddha's teachings, presence, and journey toward enlightenment¹⁰ (Coomaraswamy, 2015). As Buddhism spread across Asia, particularly to Southeast Asia, China, and Japan, the representation of the Buddha evolved, with statues and paintings becoming central to Buddhist practice. The Buddha's image came to serve as a focus for meditation, a means of transmitting teachings, and a tool for fostering spiritual reflection¹¹ (Snellgrove, 2018).

⁸ Chilton, G., Gerber, N., Councill, T., & Dreyer, M. (2015). Art therapy and its impact on mental health: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Journal of Applied Arts & Health*, 6 (3), 327 - 345.

⁹ Huntington, J. C. (2013). *The art of Buddhism: An introduction to its history and meaning*. Shambhala Publications.

¹⁰ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (2015). *The transformation of nature in art*. Dover Publications.

¹¹ Snellgrove, D. (2018). *Buddhism and Buddhist art in the context of the Buddhist world*.

Culturally, Buddha imagery carries diverse meanings in different regions. In India, the Buddha was depicted in human form, highlighting his physical presence and compassion. In other cultures, such as in Tibet and China, representations of the Buddha were incorporated into elaborate murals and thangkas, integrating local artistic traditions with Buddhist principles. Despite regional differences, the core message of enlightenment, peace, and liberation remains central to the representation of Buddha across cultures¹² (Huntington, 2013).

2.2. Common symbols in Buddha paintings

Buddha paintings are rich in symbolic imagery, each element playing a crucial role in conveying the teachings and philosophy of Buddhism. Common symbols found in these paintings include the lotus, mudras, halo, and serene expressions, each of which serves to deepen the viewer's connection to the spiritual teachings of the Buddha.

2.2.1. The Lotus

The lotus flower is one of the most prominent symbols in Buddhist art. It represents purity, enlightenment, and the unfolding of the spiritual journey. The lotus grows in muddy waters, yet it blooms with pristine beauty, symbolizing the potential for an individual to overcome the defilements of the material world and achieve enlightenment¹³ (Coomaraswamy, 2015). In Buddha paintings, the Buddha is often depicted sitting or standing on a lotus, symbolizing his transcendence over suffering and attachment.

2.2.2. Mudras

Mudras, or hand gestures, are an essential aspect of Buddha paintings and sculptures. These gestures hold deep spiritual and psychological significance, representing different states of mind or actions in the Buddhist tradition. The most commonly seen mudras in Buddha imagery include the *Dharmachakra mudra* (the gesture of teaching), the *Bhumisparsha mudra* (the gesture of touching the earth), and the *Dhyana mudra* (the gesture of meditation). Each mudra represents different aspects of the Buddha's life and teachings, including the imparting of wisdom, the quest for enlightenment, and inner peace¹⁴ (Kapitan, 2018).

2.2.3. Halo

The halo surrounding the Buddha's head is a symbol of divine enlightenment. It signifies the Buddha's spiritual power, wisdom, and connection to the divine. The halo in Buddhist art represents not only the Buddha's inner light but also the radiance of his teachings, which shine to guide others on the path of

In K. G. Jones (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to Buddhist philosophy* (pp. 455 - 468).

¹² Huntington, R. (2013). The impact of Buddhist art on Southeast Asian culture. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 31 (1), 14 – 29.

¹³ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (2015). The symbolism of the lotus in Buddhist art. *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, 24 (2), 99 – 104.

¹⁴ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Introduction to art therapy research*. Routledge.

liberation¹⁵ (Goleman, 2003). It visually communicates the transcendence of the Buddha and his role as a spiritual teacher.

2.2.4. Serene expression

One of the most striking aspects of Buddha paintings is the serene expression on the Buddha's face. This expression symbolizes calm, equanimity, and the absence of attachment or suffering. It reflects the Buddha's attainment of Nirvana—freedom from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Psychologically, the serene expression fosters a sense of peace and relaxation in the viewer, encouraging mindfulness and a connection to the present moment¹⁶ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

2.2.5. Psychological interpretations of these symbols in fostering mindfulness and tranquility

The psychological impact of Buddha paintings lies in their ability to foster mindfulness, tranquility, and emotional balance. The serene expression, for instance, has been shown to elicit a sense of calmness and emotional stability in those who engage with it. Viewing the peaceful face of the Buddha can activate areas in the brain associated with relaxation and positive emotional states, promoting a reduction in anxiety and stress levels¹⁷ (Kapitan, 2018). The lotus symbol, representing purity and enlightenment, serves as a reminder to let go of negative emotions and attachments, encouraging mindfulness and a sense of personal growth. The symbolism of the lotus aligns with the practice of meditation, where individuals are encouraged to focus on cultivating inner peace and letting go of mental clutter.

The mudras present in Buddha paintings can also influence psychological states by providing cues for specific meditative practices. For example, the *Dhyana mudra* (the gesture of meditation) fosters deep introspection and mindfulness, while the *Dharmachakra mudra* can inspire an individual to seek wisdom and knowledge. Each gesture offers a visual guide for the practitioner, promoting a sense of intentionality in their meditation practice¹⁸ (Goleman, 2003).

Additionally, the halo surrounding the Buddha symbolizes the radiance of inner wisdom, inviting individuals to reflect on their potential for wisdom and enlightenment. This representation fosters a sense of spiritual connection and inspires the viewer to cultivate qualities such as compassion, patience, and equanimity. In turn, this can lead to a sense of peace and tranquility, promoting

¹⁵ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

¹⁶ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

¹⁷ Kapitan, L. (2018). Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection. *Art Therapy*, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

¹⁸ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

psychological well-being¹⁹ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Buddha paintings, as a whole, offer an environment conducive to mindfulness, providing visual prompts that guide the viewer towards reflection, inner calm, and self-awareness. The therapeutic value of these paintings lies in their ability to help individuals connect with their emotional and spiritual states, providing a non-intrusive means of reducing stress and fostering emotional resilience²⁰ (Malchiodi, 2012). Furthermore, the connection between visual art and mental health has been well-documented, as engaging with art can serve as a form of emotional processing and stress relief, promoting overall well-being²¹ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

III. ART THERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH

3.1. Overview of art therapy as a psychological intervention

Art therapy is a well-established psychological intervention that utilizes creative processes to improve emotional, mental, and physical well-being. It combines elements of psychotherapy and artistic expression, providing individuals with a non-verbal outlet for exploring emotions, thoughts, and experiences²² (Malchiodi, 2012). By engaging in the creation of visual art, individuals can access deeper layers of the unconscious, often revealing emotions and cognitive patterns that may be difficult to express through words alone. Art therapy is particularly effective in treating a wide range of mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, trauma, and stress-related disorders²³ (Kramer, 2014). Art therapy can be conducted in various settings, from clinical environments to community-based programs, and can involve different forms of artistic expression, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, or digital art. The therapeutic process is centered around the creation of art, but it is the interpretation of the artwork and the discussions that follow that facilitate the therapeutic impact. This non-verbal approach allows individuals to bypass the limitations of traditional talk therapy, providing an alternative route to healing and self-discovery²⁴ (Kapitan, 2018). Research has shown that art therapy is particularly beneficial in improving emotional regulation, reducing stress, enhancing self-esteem, and promoting personal growth. The process of creating art encourages mindfulness, focusing the individual's attention on the

¹⁹ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

²⁰ Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). Art therapy and mindfulness-based approaches to psychological healing. In K. A. Lasky (Ed.), *Creative arts therapies and mindfulness*. Routledge.

²¹ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

²² Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). *Art therapy and mindfulness-based approaches to psychological healing*. In K. A. Lasky (Ed.), *Creative arts therapies and mindfulness*. Routledge. Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). *Art therapy and mindfulness-based approaches to psychological healing*. In K. A. Lasky (Ed.), *Creative arts therapies and mindfulness*. Routledge.

²³ Kramer, E. (2014). *Art as therapy*. Routledge.

²⁴ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Introduction to art therapy research*. Routledge.

present moment and facilitating emotional release. Through art, individuals can also gain a sense of mastery and control over their emotions and experiences, enhancing overall psychological resilience²⁵ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

3.2. Role of visual art in emotional regulation and cognitive processing

Visual art plays a critical role in emotional regulation and cognitive processing. The act of creating art provides a safe and structured way for individuals to express and process difficult emotions, such as grief, anger, fear, and sadness. These emotions are often externalized through the visual representation of the artwork, offering the individual an opportunity to observe and analyze them from a distance²⁶ (Malchiodi, 2012). The process of externalization allows for a reduction in emotional intensity and helps to regulate negative feelings that might otherwise be overwhelming. Research has demonstrated that engaging with visual art can activate regions of the brain associated with emotional regulation, such as the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, which are involved in processing and managing emotional responses²⁷ (Goleman, 2003). Art-making encourages a flow state, where the individual is fully immersed in the creative process, reducing cognitive distractions and fostering a sense of calm and relaxation. This process is closely linked to mindfulness, a key aspect of many therapeutic interventions aimed at improving mental health²⁸ (Kramer, 2014). Moreover, the interpretation of the artwork during art therapy can contribute to cognitive processing. Creating art provides individuals with a visual representation of their inner world, which can facilitate self-reflection and insight into their thoughts and behaviors. The therapist's guidance in discussing the artwork can help the individual make connections between the visual expressions and underlying cognitive patterns, facilitating cognitive restructuring and emotional healing²⁹ (Kapitan, 2018).

3.3. Connection between Buddhist-inspired art and therapeutic benefits

Buddhist-inspired art, such as Buddha paintings and mandalas, offers unique therapeutic benefits due to its deep spiritual and psychological symbolism. Buddhist art is centered around themes of mindfulness, meditation, and enlightenment, providing viewers with visual cues that promote emotional balance, calm, and self-awareness³⁰ (Snellgrove, 2018). This form of art often includes calming color schemes, serene expressions, and symbols such as the lotus flower and various mudras, which encourage reflection on inner peace and transcendence. The meditative qualities inherent

²⁵ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100(2), 254-263.

²⁶ Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). *Art therapy and health care*. Guilford Press.

²⁷ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

²⁸ Kramer, E. (2014). *Art as therapy*. Routledge.

²⁹ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Introduction to art therapy research*. Routledge.

³⁰ Snellgrove, D. (2018). Buddhism and Buddhist art in the context of the Buddhist world. In K. G. Jones (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to Buddhist philosophy* (pp. 455 - 468). Routledge.

in Buddhist art can enhance the emotional regulation process by fostering mindfulness. Mindfulness, the practice of being fully present in the moment without judgment, is a key concept in both Buddhist philosophy and modern therapeutic practices, including art therapy³¹ (Goleman, 2003).

By engaging with Buddhist art, individuals are encouraged to focus their attention, slow down, and enter a state of relaxation. This process reduces emotional reactivity and promotes a greater sense of emotional balance. Buddhist-inspired art also invites individuals to connect with deeper spiritual concepts, such as compassion, impermanence, and the nature of suffering. These teachings resonate deeply with individuals struggling with mental health issues, particularly those related to stress, anxiety, and depression. Buddhist art offers a way to explore these concepts visually, allowing individuals to process and internalize these teachings therapeutically. As a result, Buddhist art can function as a tool for cognitive and emotional healing, providing a bridge between spiritual growth and mental health³² (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Moreover, the practice of creating or engaging with Buddhist-inspired art has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, especially in populations undergoing significant stress³³ (Kapitan, 2018). The repetitive, meditative nature of practices such as mandala creation offers a form of structured focus that calms the mind and promotes psychological well-being. Additionally, the symbolic elements of Buddhist art—such as the lotus for purity or the dharmachakra for balance—serve as powerful metaphors for personal growth, healing, and overcoming life's challenges.

Research has also highlighted the potential of Buddhist art as an accessible and non-invasive therapeutic intervention. Unlike more traditional therapies, which may involve deep verbal processing or confronting painful memories directly, Buddhist-inspired art offers a less confrontational path to healing. It provides individuals with a gentle yet effective means of exploring their emotions and finding peace through visual symbolism and meditation³⁴ (Malchiodi, 2012).

IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF BUDDHA PAINTINGS

4.1. Inner peace: How Buddha imagery promotes relaxation and stress reduction

Buddha imagery is often associated with deep spiritual calmness and inner

³¹ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

³² Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

³³ Kapitan, L. (2018). Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection. *Art Therapy*, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

³⁴ Malchiodi, C.A. (2012). Art therapy and mindfulness-based approaches to psychological healing. In K. A. Lasky (Ed.), *Creative arts therapies and mindfulness*. Routledge.

peace, which are integral components of Buddhist philosophy and meditation practices. The calming effect of Buddha paintings has been recognized in psychological research, as the serene and contemplative depiction of the Buddha encourages a state of relaxation in viewers. The visual elements of Buddha paintings – such as gentle facial expressions, meditative postures, and harmonious color schemes – promote a sense of tranquility by activating areas in the brain associated with relaxation and stress reduction³⁵ (Goleman, 2003). Buddha paintings typically depict the Buddha in a seated or reclining posture, symbolizing the calm and meditative state necessary for achieving enlightenment. The act of viewing such art can induce a meditative state in individuals, facilitating a reduction in physiological stress markers such as heart rate and cortisol levels³⁶ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). By observing these images, individuals are encouraged to focus their attention on the present moment, a practice central to mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques³⁷ (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This focus on the present moment helps to mitigate negative thought patterns and promotes emotional regulation, fostering a profound sense of peace and relaxation. Furthermore, the use of calming colors in Buddha paintings – such as soft blues, greens, and golds – has been shown to have a soothing effect on the nervous system. These colors are associated with nature and serenity, reinforcing the relaxation response in the viewer's brain. As individuals engage with these paintings, they are drawn into a state of mindfulness, effectively reducing the mental clutter that often contributes to stress and anxiety³⁸ (Kapitan, 2018).

4.2. Positivity and mindfulness: Encouraging gratitude, compassion, and self-awareness

Buddha paintings are not only designed to evoke peace but also to foster positive psychological states, including gratitude, compassion, and self-awareness. In Buddhist philosophy, qualities such as compassion (*karuṇā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are central to the path toward enlightenment. These values are often represented in Buddha imagery, which serves as a visual reminder for individuals to cultivate positive emotions and attitudes (Goleman, 2003).

When individuals engage with Buddha paintings, they may experience a shift in perspective, becoming more attuned to the present moment and cultivating gratitude for what they have. The serene expression on the Buddha's face, along with the symbolism of the lotus flower and other elements, inspires reflection on one's life and encourages a sense of

³⁵ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

³⁶ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

³⁷ Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). In A. L. Miller (Ed.), *Mindfulness and health: The cognitive-behavioral perspective* (pp. 15 - 30). Routledge.

³⁸ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. *Art Therapy*, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

appreciation for the simple, positive aspects of existence. By practicing mindfulness and focusing on the positive elements of life, individuals can develop an enhanced sense of well-being³⁹ (Kapitan, 2018).

Additionally, Buddha paintings evoke compassion by encouraging individuals to reflect on the universal suffering of humanity and the path to alleviating this suffering. Through this reflection, individuals are prompted to extend kindness to others and develop an empathetic understanding of the struggles faced by others.

These emotional responses help foster a deeper sense of connection with the world and promote positive interpersonal relationships⁴⁰ (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The mindfulness cultivated through engagement with Buddha imagery is further reinforced by the meditative qualities inherent in the artwork. The quietude and peacefulness portrayed in the paintings inspire introspection, promoting self-awareness and a sense of presence. This mindfulness practice has been shown to enhance emotional regulation and contribute to improved psychological well-being⁴¹ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

4.3. Reducing anxiety and depression: Impact on brain functioning and emotional regulation

The psychological effects of Buddha paintings extend to the reduction of anxiety and depression. Research has demonstrated that engagement with art – particularly spiritual and religious artwork – can have a significant impact on emotional regulation and brain functioning. Buddhist art, with its calming and contemplative qualities, has been linked to improvements in mood and a reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression⁴² (Goleman, 2003).

Viewing Buddha imagery activates neural networks associated with emotional processing and regulation, particularly the prefrontal cortex and amygdala⁴³ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). The prefrontal cortex is involved in regulating emotional responses, while the amygdala is responsible for processing fear and stress. The calming effect of Buddha paintings helps to activate the prefrontal cortex, thereby inhibiting the overactivity of the amygdala, which is often heightened in individuals with anxiety or depression⁴⁴ (Kapitan, 2018).

³⁹ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Introduction to art therapy research*. Routledge.

⁴⁰ Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). *Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)*. In A. L. Miller (Ed.), *Mindfulness and health: The cognitive-behavioral perspective* (pp. 15 - 30). Routledge.

⁴¹ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁴² Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁴³ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100(2), 254-263.

⁴⁴ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. Art Therapy, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

As a result, individuals who engage with these paintings may experience a decrease in emotional reactivity, leading to a reduction in anxiety and depressive symptoms. In addition to the neural effects, Buddha paintings help regulate the physiological responses to stress. Studies have shown that exposure to spiritual artwork, including Buddhist art, can lower cortisol levels, a key indicator of stress. This physiological response indicates that engaging with Buddha imagery has the potential to reduce both mental and physical stress, contributing to an overall sense of well-being⁴⁵ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

4.4. Case studies and empirical evidence: Studies on the psychological influence of religious/ spiritual artwork

Several empirical studies have examined the psychological impact of religious and spiritual artwork, including Buddha paintings, on mental health. One study by Stuckey and Nobel (2010) reviewed the therapeutic benefits of art therapy, particularly religious and spiritual art, and found that such artwork significantly improved mood, emotional regulation, and psychological resilience. The study highlighted that exposure to spiritual images like those of the Buddha encourages mindfulness, reducing negative emotional states such as stress, anxiety, and depression.

A case study by Kapitan (2018) explored the therapeutic benefits of using Buddhist-inspired art in mindfulness-based interventions for individuals with anxiety and depression. The study found that participants who engaged with Buddhist imagery experienced significant improvements in their emotional well-being, including reduced symptoms of anxiety and greater emotional stability.

The study concluded that Buddhist art, with its calming imagery and spiritual symbolism, can be a powerful tool in supporting mental health and emotional regulation. Another case study by Goleman (2003) investigated the impact of meditation practices supported by Buddhist imagery on brain functioning. The study found that participants who meditated in the presence of Buddha paintings exhibited increased activity in the prefrontal cortex and a reduction in the amygdala's stress response. These findings suggest that Buddhist imagery, when combined with meditation, can enhance emotional regulation and promote mental well-being.

V. INTEGRATION OF BUDDHA PAINTINGS IN THERAPEUTIC SETTINGS

5.1. Use of Buddha paintings in meditation spaces, therapy rooms, and wellness centers

Buddha paintings have become increasingly popular in therapeutic settings, including meditation spaces, therapy rooms, and wellness centers,

⁴⁵ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

due to their calming and transformative qualities. In these environments, the visual presence of Buddha imagery is believed to support relaxation, emotional regulation, and mental clarity. The serene postures and peaceful expressions of the Buddha, coupled with the spiritual symbolism embedded in the artwork, foster a sense of tranquility and mindfulness.

This makes Buddha paintings an effective tool in therapeutic spaces where the goal is to create an atmosphere conducive to healing and self-reflection⁴⁶ (Goleman, 2003). In meditation spaces and therapy rooms, the integration of Buddha paintings helps set the tone for deep introspection and mindfulness practices. The artwork serves as a visual anchor that guides individuals into a focused state of awareness, allowing them to connect with the present moment and enter a meditative state. As a result, these paintings are often used in settings where clients are encouraged to engage in mindfulness practices, such as meditation or breathing exercises, to reduce stress and improve emotional well-being⁴⁷ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

In wellness centers, Buddha paintings contribute to the creation of a holistic environment that promotes mental, emotional, and physical healing. Many wellness centers use these artworks to enhance the therapeutic experience, combining them with other holistic therapies such as yoga, acupuncture, and sound therapy. The calming presence of Buddha imagery helps to create a space where individuals feel supported and encouraged in their journey toward self-healing and balance⁴⁸ (Kapitan, 2018).

5.2. Influence on mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and stress reduction techniques

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is an evidence-based intervention designed to prevent the recurrence of depression by teaching individuals how to become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. MBCT combines elements of mindfulness meditation with cognitive-behavioral techniques to help individuals break free from patterns of negative thinking that contribute to emotional distress. Buddha paintings, with their emphasis on serenity, mindfulness, and self-awareness, align closely with the principles of MBCT, making them a valuable tool in supporting the therapeutic process⁴⁹ (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

The visual symbolism of Buddha paintings – such as the lotus flower, mudras, and calm facial expressions – encourages a state of mindfulness

⁴⁶ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁴⁷ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁴⁸ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. Art Therapy, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

⁴⁹ Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). *Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)*. In A. L. Miller (Ed.), *Mindfulness and health: The cognitive-behavioral perspective* (pp. 15 - 30). Routledge.

and reflection, which is essential to the practice of MBCT. These artworks serve as a reminder for individuals to observe their thoughts without judgment and to cultivate a sense of awareness and presence. The peaceful imagery of the Buddha can help clients focus their attention on their breathing or bodily sensations, reducing mental clutter and fostering emotional regulation⁵⁰ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). By incorporating Buddha paintings into the therapy room, therapists can reinforce the meditative and non-judgmental mindset required in MBCT, helping clients develop greater emotional resilience and self-awareness⁵¹ (Goleman, 2003).

Furthermore, Buddha paintings can be used as visual aids in mindfulness exercises during therapy sessions, enhancing the client's ability to focus and practice present-moment awareness. The artwork serves as a focal point for meditation, helping individuals detach from their ruminative thoughts and return to a state of mental clarity and relaxation. In this way, Buddha paintings contribute to the reduction of stress, anxiety, and depression, which are often central concerns in MBCT⁵² (Kapitan, 2018).

5.3. Application in clinical psychology for trauma recovery and emotional healing

In clinical psychology, Buddha paintings are increasingly being integrated into therapeutic settings, particularly in trauma recovery and emotional healing practices. Trauma can disrupt an individual's sense of safety and self-regulation, leading to heightened levels of anxiety, hypervigilance, and emotional dysregulation. Buddha imagery, with its emphasis on compassion, acceptance, and inner peace, provides a source of comfort and stability for individuals struggling with the aftermath of traumatic experiences⁵³ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

The symbolic representation of the Buddha as a figure of peace and healing serves as a reminder that recovery is possible. For individuals who have experienced trauma, the visual presence of Buddha paintings can promote a sense of safety, offering a visual reminder that healing is a gradual process. The serene imagery encourages individuals to approach their emotions with patience and self-compassion, which is essential in trauma-informed therapy⁵⁴ (Goleman, 2003).

Research suggests that incorporating mindfulness practices into trauma recovery can be highly effective in reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and emotional distress. Buddha paintings play

⁵⁰ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁵¹ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁵² Kapitan, L. (2018). *Introduction to art therapy research*. Routledge.

⁵³ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁵⁴ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

a role in this process by reinforcing the principles of mindfulness and emotional regulation. In trauma-informed care, therapists may use Buddha paintings to help clients focus on grounding techniques, such as deep breathing or sensory awareness, which are crucial for managing the physiological symptoms of trauma⁵⁵ (Kapitan, 2018).

Additionally, Buddha paintings can support emotional healing by encouraging clients to confront and process their emotions in a safe and non-judgmental environment. The peaceful and meditative qualities of the artwork provide an invitation for individuals to reflect on their experiences and emotions without becoming overwhelmed. In this way, Buddha paintings act as a therapeutic tool for fostering emotional expression, self-reflection, and healing in the context of trauma recovery⁵⁶ (Goleman, 2003).

VI. CULTURAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. Respecting cultural and religious significance in modern applications

Buddha paintings carry deep cultural and religious significance within Buddhist traditions, serving as sacred symbols that embody the teachings and values of Buddhism. These images are often revered and venerated as part of spiritual practices, and their use is embedded in a rich historical and cultural context.

Therefore, when integrating Buddha paintings into modern therapeutic or commercial settings, it is essential to approach their use with respect for their spiritual and cultural importance. In therapeutic environments, such as meditation spaces and wellness centers, the display of Buddha imagery should be done with an understanding of its sacred nature. While Buddha paintings can be valuable tools for fostering peace, mindfulness, and emotional regulation, their use mustn't dilute or commercialize their meaning. Art therapists, wellness practitioners, and designers who choose to incorporate Buddha imagery should educate themselves about the symbolic significance of these paintings to ensure that their use is respectful and not trivialized⁵⁷ (Goleman, 2003).

Furthermore, the use of Buddha paintings in secular or commercial settings – such as in yoga studios or home décor – should be done with sensitivity to the religious context. It is important to acknowledge that these paintings represent not only artistic expression but also a connection to the Buddha's teachings, which may hold deep spiritual value for practitioners of Buddhism. Misusing or misappropriating these symbols without regard for their original meaning can lead to cultural appropriation, which is seen as disrespectful and harmful to those who hold these symbols sacred⁵⁸ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). To ensure respectful and culturally sensitive use, individuals and organizations need to

⁵⁵ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Introduction to art therapy research*. Routledge.

⁵⁶ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁵⁷ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁵⁸ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

engage in dialogue with Buddhist communities or scholars to understand the appropriate contexts for displaying such imagery. This engagement helps avoid the commodification of sacred symbols and ensures that they are used in ways that honor their original intent and cultural significance⁵⁹ (Kapitan, 2018).

6.2. Ethical implications of commercializing Buddhist imagery

The commercialization of Buddhist imagery, including Buddha paintings, has become increasingly prevalent in modern society. Buddha paintings are often sold as decorative items or therapeutic tools in various commercial outlets, from art galleries to online marketplaces. While this commercialization can make these artworks more accessible to a broader audience, it also raises ethical concerns regarding the commodification of religious symbols.

One major ethical issue is the potential for the exploitation of sacred Buddhist imagery for profit. When Buddha paintings are sold as mere decorative objects or novelty items without regard for their religious significance, they can become detached from their original meaning and purpose. This reduction of religious symbols to consumer goods can be seen as a form of cultural exploitation, particularly when the profits generated from such sales are not directed back to the communities that maintain the cultural and religious heritage of Buddhism⁶⁰ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Another ethical concern arises from the potential for misunderstanding or misrepresentation of Buddhist teachings when Buddha imagery is used in secular or commercial contexts. For example, the display of Buddha paintings in a retail environment, where they are marketed as symbols of calm or relaxation, risks oversimplifying or distorting the deeper philosophical and spiritual teachings that these images represent. This commercialization can lead to a shallow or inaccurate understanding of Buddhism, contributing to cultural appropriation and the trivialization of a rich spiritual tradition⁶¹ (Kapitan, 2018).

To address these ethical concerns, it is important for businesses, artists, and practitioners to carefully consider the implications of using Buddha imagery for profit. Efforts should be made to respect the spiritual and cultural roots of the artwork, ensuring that it is presented in ways that reflect its sacredness and value. Additionally, profits derived from the sale of Buddha paintings could be directed toward supporting Buddhist communities or charitable causes, helping to balance the commercial aspects with respect for the traditions they represent⁶² (Goleman, 2003).

⁵⁹ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. Art Therapy, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

⁶⁰ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100(2), 254 - 263.

⁶¹ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. Art Therapy, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

⁶² Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

Moreover, transparency and education are key components in ethically navigating the use of Buddha imagery. Businesses and practitioners should provide information about the origins and significance of the images they are selling, helping consumers to understand the deeper cultural context of the artwork. This approach can foster greater cultural awareness and respect for the traditions behind the imagery, reducing the risk of exploitation and misappropriation⁶³ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

VII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

7.1. Summary of key findings

The integration of Buddha paintings into therapeutic settings has proven to have several positive psychological benefits, including promoting inner peace, reducing stress, fostering mindfulness, and aiding in emotional regulation. Buddha paintings, with their serene and symbolic representations, serve as powerful tools in meditation spaces, therapy rooms, and wellness centers. These paintings not only create a calming environment conducive to healing but also encourage mindfulness practices that can significantly improve mental health outcomes. In particular, Buddhist imagery, such as the Buddha's meditative postures, mudras, and the symbolism of the lotus flower, has shown promise in reducing anxiety and promoting emotional resilience⁶⁴ (Goleman, 2003). Furthermore, incorporating Buddha imagery into therapies such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) enhances clients' ability to engage in mindfulness and self-reflection, crucial aspects of emotional healing and stress reduction. This integration offers a holistic approach to therapy, combining artistic, spiritual, and psychological components. However, while the therapeutic potential of Buddha paintings is clear, the ethical and cultural considerations surrounding their use cannot be overlooked. Ensuring that these images are respected and not commercialized or misappropriated is vital to maintaining their integrity and honoring their religious and cultural significance⁶⁵ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

7.2. Recommendations for integrating Buddhist art in psychological interventions

Given the positive psychological effects associated with Buddhist paintings, several recommendations can be made for their integration into psychological interventions:

7.2.1. Cultural sensitivity and education: It is essential for therapists, wellness practitioners, and organizations using Buddha imagery to educate themselves about the cultural and religious significance of these paintings. Training programs should be offered to those incorporating Buddha imagery

⁶³ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁶⁴ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁶⁵ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

into therapy rooms and meditation spaces to ensure they understand and respect the artwork's origins⁶⁶ (Kapitan, 2018).

7.2.2. Mindfulness-based interventions: Buddha paintings should be integrated into mindfulness-based therapies, such as MBCT, where they can serve as visual anchors to promote mindfulness and self-awareness. These images can be incorporated into therapy sessions, meditation practices, and even home-based interventions, helping individuals connect with a sense of calm and centeredness during mindfulness exercises⁶⁷ (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

7.2.3. Therapeutic environment design: Healthcare and wellness environments, such as therapy rooms, yoga studios, and wellness centers, should incorporate Buddha paintings thoughtfully to enhance the therapeutic atmosphere. By doing so, these spaces can be transformed into sanctuaries for relaxation and emotional healing, promoting a deeper sense of peace and comfort for clients⁶⁸ (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

7.2.4. Ethical considerations: It is crucial to approach the commercialization of Buddha paintings with care. When using these images for profit, businesses and organizations must consider their cultural and spiritual significance and ensure that they are not exploiting sacred symbols. Transparency, education, and collaboration with Buddhist communities are necessary steps to maintain the ethical use of Buddha imagery⁶⁹ (Goleman, 2003).

7.3. Future research directions in neuroaesthetics and mindfulness-based therapies

While existing research has demonstrated the potential benefits of integrating Buddha paintings into therapeutic settings, several avenues for future research can further enhance our understanding of their effects. One promising area is **neuroaesthetics**, the study of how visual art affects brain function and emotional response. Future studies could use neuroimaging techniques, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), to explore how exposure to Buddha paintings influences brain activity, particularly in regions associated with emotional regulation, stress reduction, and mindfulness⁷⁰ (Chilton et al., 2015).

Further research could also investigate how the symbolic elements within Buddha paintings – such as mudras, lotus flowers, and the Buddha's posture – affect emotional processing and psychological

⁶⁶ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. Art Therapy, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

⁶⁷ Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). *Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)*. In A. L. Miller (Ed.), *Mindfulness and health: The cognitive-behavioral perspective* (pp. 15 - 30). Routledge.

⁶⁸ Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁶⁹ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

⁷⁰ Chilton, G., Gerber, N., Councill, T., & Dreyer, M. (2015). Art therapy and its impact on mental health: An interdisciplinary perspective. Journal of Applied Arts & Health, 6 (3), 327 - 345.

states. These studies could provide insight into which specific aspects of Buddha imagery are most effective for fostering mindfulness and emotional well-being⁷¹ (Kapitan, 2018).

Another important area for future exploration is the **long-term effects** of integrating Buddha paintings into mindfulness-based therapies. Research could examine how consistent exposure to Buddha paintings over time influences mental health outcomes, such as reductions in anxiety, depression, and stress. Longitudinal studies could help determine the sustained therapeutic benefits of Buddha imagery in enhancing emotional resilience and well-being.

Additionally, research into **cross-cultural applications** of Buddha paintings could expand our understanding of their universal therapeutic potential. While Buddha imagery is deeply rooted in Buddhist traditions, exploring its effectiveness across different cultural contexts and belief systems could yield valuable insights into its global relevance in promoting mindfulness and emotional healing⁷² (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Finally, as mindfulness-based therapies continue to gain popularity, future research could explore how Buddha paintings can be incorporated into various therapeutic modalities, such as trauma recovery, addiction treatment, and chronic pain management. This would broaden the scope of their application and offer more comprehensive solutions for individuals struggling with complex mental health issues⁷³ (Goleman, 2003).

⁷¹ Kapitan, L. (2018). *Art therapy and mindfulness: Exploring the intersection*. Art Therapy, 35 (3), 141 - 148.

⁷² Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). *The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of the evidence*. American Journal of Public Health, 100 (2), 254 - 263.

⁷³ Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam.

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COMPASSION, COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION, AND GLOBAL ETHICS



HOW TO CULTIVATE HAPPINESS AND PEACE

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Abstract:

In a world driven by material progress, most people pursue wealth, power, and authority, leading to conflict and a lack of peace. Although they claim a desire for peace, they only seek it when they are unable to dominate others. The root cause of this lack of peace is mental states such as attachment, anger, and ignorance associated with other defilements like wrong view, pride, jealousy, stinginess, remorse, lack of moral shame and dread, and restlessness. According to Buddha's teachings, real peace and happiness can only be achieved by reducing and ultimately removing these defilements through practices like tranquility meditation (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*). Tranquility meditation helps suppress defilements and cultivate mental stability. Insight meditation leads to the realization of the impermanent nature of mind and matter, finally freeing one from attachment and suffering.

When searching for happiness, the pursuit of limited, sensual happiness is transient and leads to dissatisfaction, whereas unlimited, lasting happiness arises from meditation and detachment. To achieve true peace and happiness, it must take the time to understand the meditation practice, renounce attachment to material pleasures and cultivate insight knowledge into the true nature of existence to eliminate all defilements. Only by uprooting defilements can one attain the highest happiness and peace, as taught by the Buddha.

Keywords: *Buddhism, happiness, peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Everything in the world is dependent upon the cause. If there is a cause, there will be an effect. According to the principle of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), there is no effect without cause. The happiness and peace people need in society are the effects of a good mood. They originate from the mind. If the people want them, they need to cultivate the good causes in the

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mind. For the cultivation of good causes, it is important to know one's mind first and must differentiate good and bad mind thoroughly. Because they are the causes of happiness and suffering. A good mind must be cultivated, and a bad mind must be removed for the achievement of happiness.¹

How much misery can give rise to the people if they don't know their mind? For the happiness and peace in the world, what kinds of mind or mental states do the people need to remove and cultivate in the mind? How many techniques are there to cultivate the good mind? How do the Buddha's teachings guide the people toward happiness, peace, and unity among them? This paper aims to explore these questions from the perspective of Buddhist teachings, analyzing how mental cultivation leads to inner and societal harmony. The study will be conducted using content analysis, drawing insights from Buddhist scriptures and teachings to understand the role of the mind in achieving true peace and happiness.

In today's world, people are relentlessly pursuing material progress in their respective fields. They are like contestants and strive to expand their businesses, build many factories, have many properties, and gain power or authority. This competition makes them argue and creates conflicts among individuals. They are enslaved by greed, hatred, and ignorance. Although they claim to desire peace, they want it only when they cannot dominate others. If they are winners, they rarely consider the need for peace. While addressing the need for peace, they continue to build factories producing weapons designed to harm others. This contradiction stems from a desire for greater power and material wealth.

If the people want to live happily or peacefully in their life, they must firstly emphasize their mind whether the bad mental states; greed (*tanhā* or *lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*) arise or not. They are the origins of conflicts and arguments among individuals. They must be suppressed, decreased, or removed by applying the techniques the Buddha instructed. Based on the morality (*sīla*), the Buddha gave the instructions in two ways: tranquility (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*). Observing morality can help people to live happily because it can prevent them from committing unlawful actions. Tranquility meditation can help people suppress the bad mental states, and insight meditation can help not only decrease but also remove them.

For happiness and peace, the techniques well known in today's world, such as loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), appreciative joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) are included in the tranquility meditation.² They are also the good mental states needed to cultivate to be strong and to suppress the bad mental states that can cause miseries among the society. Cultivating loving-kindness and compassion can suppress the hatred (*dosa*). Appreciative joy can suppress jealousy (*issā*) and stinginess (*macchariya*). Equanimity can suppress both attachment (*lobha*) and hatred (*dosa*).

¹ *Abh-a. I, 82 Anavajjasukhavipāka lakkhaṇā kusālā, sāvajjadukkhavipāka lakkhaṇā akusālā.*

² Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans, *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Kandy Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, (1999), p. 336.

Tranquility meditation can only suppress the bad mental states or hindrances and cannot eradicate them to be firm loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity. However, it is good to practice tranquility meditation to suppress the bad mental states. And then they can be eradicated by practicing insight meditation. Only then, happiness and peace among the people be firm as well as in oneself. Therefore, in this paper, both techniques, the practical ways of the Buddha's teachings, will be briefly presented for happiness and peace.

II. THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE ABSENCE OF HAPPINESS AND PEACE

If people need happiness and peace, they must try to remove the opposite causes. As long as the opposite causes arise in mind, miseries or suffering will appear, and the happiness and peace they need will be far away. The Buddha said, "There are, great king, three things which, when they arise within a person, arise for his harm, suffering and discomfort. What are the three? Greed, hatred, and delusion."³

Greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) are the main causes of suffering, and they are also the roots or leaders of all unwholesome mental states. It is mentioned in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* as follows;

When greed arises in the mind, wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) and conceit (*māna*) follow separately. When hatred arises in the mind, jealousy (*issā*), stinginess (*maccharia*), and remorse (*kukkucca*) may also follow. Whenever any unwholesome consciousness arises, ignorance (*moha*), moral shamelessness (*ahirika*), fearlessness of wrongdoing (*anottappa*), and restlessness (*uddhacca*) are also generated. Sloth (*thina*) and torpor (*middha*) arise together with greed and anger as well. But delusion arises only with the *citta* associated with delusion.⁴

Because of those unwholesome mental states, beings are committing evil actions or deeds that can retain the potentiality to cause miseries and sufferings. Most miseries and sufferings in the world are the disadvantages of unwholesome deeds. But according to the dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), even the wholesome deed is a cause of suffering. It was said by the Buddha that dependent upon *kammic* formation, arises consciousness (*saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ*).⁵ All phenomena described in the dependent origination are said as suffering by the word "*evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa* meaning thus arises this whole mass of suffering".⁶

Three kinds of suffering are mentioned in the text such as the suffering due to pain (*dukkha*), suffering due to formations (*saṅkhāra dukkha*), and suffering due to change (*vipariṇāma dukkha*).⁷ From the standpoint of this statement,

³ *Samyutta Nikāya*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., vol I. Boston: Wisdom Publication, (2000), p 166.

⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Boston: Wisdom Publication, (2000), p.95.

⁵ V. III, 1.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Samyutta Nikāya*, Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., vol. II. Boston: Wisdom Publication, (2000),

all worldly things are included in suffering, and even the wholesome deeds cause suffering to arise. The reason should be found out why wholesome deeds cause suffering to arise.

It can be said that only when both wholesome and unwholesome *kammic* formations are accompanied by defilements can they cause suffering to arise. Those *kammic* formations cannot produce any result without the help of those mental defilements. Studying *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, *kammic* formations arise dependent upon mental defilements; ignorance (*moha*), attachment (*lobha*) and clinging (*upādāna*) thus; dependent upon ignorance, *kammic* formations arises (*avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā*), and dependent upon attachment, clinging arises (*taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ*), dependent upon clinging, volition arises (*upādānapaccayā kammabhavo*).⁸ All *kammic* formations or wholesome and unwholesome volitions arise dependent upon defilements. Therefore, they become the causes of suffering.

III. SEARCHING FOR HAPPINESS

Not to give rise the suffering in *saṃsāra* or to achieve happiness and peace, one must try to remove only the defilements, not *kammic* formations. This kind of suffering can be called mind-made suffering. Sufferings were summarized into two as man-made suffering and mind-made suffering by Dr K Sridhammananda in his book of *You and Your Problems*. However, he said the word ‘problem’ instead of suffering. The word, suffering is used in this paper because it is related to the word, problem as equal. As long as the defilements cannot be eradicated, mind-made suffering will arise. No one can escape from it.⁹

He refers to that mind-made suffering means natural suffering as aging, sickness and death. There is no way to avoid them. He described that some problems are man-made, created by people according to their worldly understanding of life. By allowing internal and external stimuli to affect the mind, more unsatisfactoriness, misery, excitement, fear, and insecurity are created.¹⁰

However, both sufferings, man-made and mind-made, can be overcome in three ways such as observing morality (*sīla*), cultivating concentration (*samādhi*), and developing wisdom (*paññā*). Because they are also the ways to remove the defilements. Morality can remove the transgression defilement (*vītikkaṃma kilesā*), cultivating the concentration can remove the outburst defilement (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesā*), and cultivating the wisdom can remove the latent defilement (*anusaya kilesā*).¹¹

p. 1299.

⁸ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, (2010), p. 623.

⁹ Dr. K Sridhammananda, *You & Your Problems*, Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, (2004), p. 12.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ D-A I. 20.

Observing morality (*sīla*) helps beings to live with ethical conduct, ensuring their actions do not harm others or themselves. It acts as a safeguard against transgression defilements (*vitikkama kilesā*), which include immoral actions such as killing or causing harm, stealing, committing sexual misconduct, and telling lies. By adhering to moral principles, people can create a life based on honesty, kindness, and respect for others, thereby reducing the mental agitation and guilt associated with harmful actions.

The fundamental teachings as morality are mentioned in the Buddhist texts as five precepts (*pañcasīla*). They are: (1) abstaining from killing any living being, (2) stealing others' property, (3) committing sexual misconduct, (4) telling lies, and (5) taking intoxicating drinks and drugs.¹²

Let alone other practices in the Buddha's teachings, even observing morality can help people to live happily and harmoniously in society.

The practice of cultivating concentration (*samādhi*) plays a vital role in removing the outburst defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesā*), which are the mental distractions and disturbances that prevent the mind from focusing and meditating effectively. When concentration is developed through mindfulness meditation, the mind becomes calm, clear, and stable, allowing the practitioner to detach from worldly distractions and achieve deeper states of peace. This practice strengthens the ability to control the mind and gradually removes the subtle defilements that suppress true understanding and insight.

Finally, cultivating wisdom (*paññā*) is the ultimate path to eradicating the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesā*), which are deeply ingrained tendencies and unconscious attachments that continue to perpetuate suffering. Wisdom, gained through insight into the true nature of reality, helps to see things as they truly are – impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self. With this understanding, attachment, craving, hatred, and ignorance are gradually eradicated, allowing for the full realization of liberation and enlightenment. Through wisdom, one can uproot the deepest forms of defilement, leading to the cessation of all suffering.

The Buddha's teachings emphasize that suffering, whether man-made or mind-made, can be overcome by cultivating morality, concentration, and wisdom. Each of these practices addresses a different aspect of the mind's defilements, allowing the individual to purify their actions and thoughts and ultimately achieve peace and happiness.

Beings naturally have the desire that they don't want suffering and they want happiness and peace. They are always trying to remove suffering and search for happiness. According to the Buddha's teachings, peace is related to happiness.¹³ Without peace, happiness cannot exist. They are interdependent. However, the pursuit of happiness must be in the right way. When searching for happiness, if the way is wrong, it leads to further dissatisfaction. Happiness

¹² S. II. 442.

¹³ *Passaddhi sukhatthāya*, V. V, p 288.

can be categorized into two types: limited (transitory) happiness (*mattāsukha*) and unlimited (lasting) happiness (*vipulasukha*).¹⁴

Two Types of Happiness

Limited happiness refers to the limited time when one enjoys it. It is also called transitory happiness because the duration of enjoyment for this happiness is short. This type of happiness is fleeting and often accompanied by fatigue after enjoyment. For example, the eyes enjoy the happiness in the beautiful forms, ears in the pleasure sound, nose in the good smells, tongue in the good taste, and body in the pleasurable tangible objects. Whatever is enjoyed in any sense organ, all sensory pleasure whether visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory are temporary and getting fatigue after enjoyment. Therefore, it is called limited happiness. How does this happiness become fatigue after enjoyment?

For instance, when the eyes enjoy happiness by watching good movies for one or two hours, the eyes are getting indistinct, and we are also getting tired. In the same way, when it takes us one or two hours to listen to a sweet sound we like, gradually we don't want to listen anymore and it gets boring and noisy. When the nose enjoys the scent of sweat, after taking one or two hours, it becomes dizzy. After eating very good food up to the full of stomach, it becomes tired. When touching or using pleasurable, tangible objects like a luxury or very comfortable seat, bed, and so on, it becomes uncomfortable after one or two hours. We can enjoy everything, but it is transitory. After a short time, we get bored and tired. That is why it is called limited happiness. "If people want unlimited happiness or lasting happiness (*vipulasukha*), they have to renounce this limited happiness," said the Buddha.¹⁵

Unlimited happiness refers to the happiness of *Nibbāna*. It can be obtained through tranquility and insight meditation. However, tranquility meditation can only provide to have the strong concentration that can support insight meditation to have the insight knowledge quickly. Through insight and knowledge, unlimited happiness can be achieved. Insight meditation can directly provide insight knowledge, but it may take a long time. But both meditations can support having unlimited happiness. This happiness can be enjoyed for a long time as we wish, and after enjoyment, no tiredness or side effects will be felt. The mind is fresh and more powerful than ever.¹⁶

IV. CAUSES OF UNHAPPINESS IN THE SAKKAPĀÑHA SUTTA

If people want to live happily and peacefully or want to overcome suffering, the Buddha advised that they must understand their nature and origin. It was mentioned above that mental defilements are the origin of suffering.

¹⁴ *Dhp* 55.

¹⁵ *Dhp* 55.

Mattāsukha pariccāgā, passe ce vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.

Caje mattāsukhaṃ dhiro, sampassaṃ vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.

¹⁶ *Dhp* 280.

Furthermore, it was said in the *sakkapañha-sutta* thus;

Sakka, the ruler of the gods, put a profound question to the Lord, seeking to understand why beings, despite their inherent desire for peace and harmony, continue to live in conflict, harboring hate, hostility, and harm toward each other. He inquired about the source of such suffering, pondering why gods, humans, *asuras*, *nāgas*, *gandhabbas*, and other beings are bound by forces that prevent them from living in peace. Despite their wish to be free from malice and ill will, they are often caught in cycles of negative emotions and destructive behavior.

The Lord's response to Sakka's question was both insightful and revealing. He explained that the primary fetters or bonds that bind beings in such destructive cycles are jealousy (*issā*) and stinginess (*macchariya*). These powerful forces, which arise from deep-seated desires and attachment, prevent beings from living in harmony. Jealousy, the feeling of envy and resentment towards others, and stinginess, the feeling of selfishness, cloud the mind and foster feelings of competition, fear, and aggression. As a result, even when beings wish to live without hatred or malice, these negative emotions and desires inevitably lead them to harm one another, perpetuating a cycle of hostility and suffering. They were mentioned in that *sutta* as follows;

Sakka, ruler of the gods, put his first question to the Lord: 'By what fetters, sir, are beings bound gods, humans, *asuras*, *nāgas*, *gandhabbas* and whatever other kinds there may be – whereby, although they wish to live without hate, harming, hostility or malignity, and in peace, they yet live in hate, harming one another, hostile and malign?'

This was *sakka's* first question to the Lord, and the Lord replied: 'Ruler of the gods, it is the bonds of jealousy and avarice that bind beings so that, though they wish to live without hate, ... they yet live in hate, harming one another, hostile and malign.'¹⁷

In that *sutta* also, it can be found that the opposites of happiness and peace are mental defilements: jealousy and avarice. As mentioned above, they are associated with mental factors of hatred. When studying this *sutta* in detail, the causes of hate, harming, hostility, or malignity are mentioned. If beings want to live happily and peacefully without hate, they are advised to remove the causes: greed, hatred, and ignorance.

To achieve happiness and peace, they need to decrease the mental defilements and try to remove them. The Buddha provided a systematic approach to reduce and remove defilements through two kinds of meditation: tranquility and insight meditation. Practicing these techniques not only cultivates peace and happiness but also promotes mental well-being. Without trying to reduce and remove mental defilements, let alone unlimited happiness, even sensual happiness (*kāmasukha*) would not be achieved. If one of the meditative techniques is to follow, the meditator must observe morality first. It was said by the Buddha.

¹⁷ *Dīgha Nikāya*, Maurice Walshe, trans., Boston: Wisdom Publication, (1995), p. 328.

When a wise man, established well in virtue,
 Develops consciousness and understanding,
 Then, as a *bhikkhu* ardent and sagacious
 He succeeds in disentangling this tangle.¹⁸

V. TRANQUILITY MEDITATION

According to the Buddha's teachings, tranquility meditation is called *Samatha* in *Pāli*. It must be practiced by focusing on a single meditation object mentioned in the Buddhist texts. Forty kinds of tranquility meditation objects are mentioned in the *Abhidhammatthasāṅgaha*.¹⁹ Among them, a meditator must carefully select one object that aligns with his temperament and mental disposition. The chosen object must bring inner peace and stability, allowing the mind to settle without distraction. To have a strong concentration on that object, it may take one or two hours or maybe one or two weeks.

To suppress the defilements that can prevent happiness and peace, it was specially instructed the Four Brahma Vihāras, the subjects of tranquility meditation in the *Dīgha Nikāya* thus;

If you develop the emancipation of the heart through loving-kindness (*mettā*), ill-will (*byāpāda*) has no chance to envelop your heart. This emancipation through loving-kindness is the cure for ill will. If you develop the emancipation of the heart through compassion (*karuṇā*), the cruelty has no chance to envelop your heart. This emancipation through compassion is the cure for cruelty. If you develop the emancipation of the heart through sympathetic joy (*muditā*), the aversion (*arati*) has no chance to envelop your heart. This emancipation through sympathetic joy is the cure for aversion. If you develop the emancipation of the heart through equanimity (*upekkhā*), the lust (*rāga*) has no chance to envelop your heart. This emancipation through equanimity is the cure for lust.²⁰

In this instruction, the four brahma vihāras are mentioned as loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). They are also known as abodes of brahma, excellent or sublime attitudes, boundless states, and divine states. They are referred to as abodes of brahma as the brahmas (heavenly beings) are supposed to possess limitless loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity towards other beings. In human beings they may function at several levels or exist in a dormant form until they are cultivated through the practice of meditation.

Venerable Buddhaghosa, the Buddhist scholar in the fifth century AD, has defined the brahma vihāras in his book *The Path of Purification (visuddhimagga)* as follows;

¹⁸ S. I. 167.

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*, Boston: Wisdom Publication, p. 330.

²⁰ *Dīgha Nikāya*, Maurice Walshe, trans., Boston: Wisdom Publication, p. 500.

“Why are these called Brahma-vihāra? It is because they are supreme and faultless. These states constitute the best mode of conduct towards others. The Brahmas live with their minds freed of the five hindrances. The meditators who are endowed with these states also live with faultless minds like the Brahmas.”²¹

Cultivating the four brahma vihāras can suppress the mental defilements. Loving-kindness can suppress ill-will or hatred (*dosa*), compassion can suppress cruelty (*dosa*), sympathetic joy can suppress the aversion or jealousy (*issā*), and equanimity can suppress lust (*rāga* or *lobha*). They can be developed systematically for happiness and peace in society. The systematic instructions to cultivate them are mentioned in the Visuddhimagga. In this paper, a brief explanation will be mentioned.

In loving kindness, there is no self-interest or attachment, and the absolute motive should be the welfare and happiness of other beings. When one is practising loving kindness, unconditional loving kindness should be sent to all sentient beings whether they are friendly, unfriendly, or neutral, with nothing expected in return. Well-developed loving kindness can be the perfect antidote to negative feelings like resentment, anger, ill-will, and hatred.²²

Compassion is related to the suffering beings. Even when compassion begins to appear about a suffering person during meditation on compassion, it should be associated with a degree of loving kindness, which can protect it from possible negative reactions such as sentimental pity, anxiety, and fear. In a way, meditation on compassion is an extension of loving kindness when one is confronted with suffering in others.

Sympathetic joy is the positive quality of being able to share in the happiness of others and feel appreciation and joy when someone else is experiencing some happiness. When others are happy or successful this quality makes one feel happy as if one is experiencing that success and happiness oneself. It is similar to the joy that a mother experiences when her child is doing well and is happy.

Equanimity is the state of mind based on wisdom which can stay calm and balanced when one faces the multiplicity of vicissitudes of life. While others are reacting emotionally and suffer with an unbalanced mind when faced with the vicissitudes of life, one who has developed equanimity can maintain composure with a balanced mind and emotional evenness without reacting with craving towards desirable experiences or rejection towards undesirable experiences.

When practicing tranquility meditation, the meditator must focus on the concept object (*paññatti*). The four brahma vihāras included in the tranquility meditation must be cultivated by focusing on the objects of living beings, or they must be cultivated towards the living beings so that the hatred, cruelty, jealousy, and

²¹ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification*, Boston: Wisdom Publication, p.291.

²² Dr. Ari Ubeysekara, Four Divine Abodes (*brahma vihāras*) in Theravada Buddhism. 28, Feb, 2025. <https://drarisworld.wordpress.com/category/four-divine-abodes/>

lust will not arise in them. All living beings, the objects of the four brahama vihāras, are also called concept objects.

When the mind is stable and firm on that object, hindrances or defilements can be suppressed, decreased, or calmed down in the mind. The meditator's mind is away from sensual desire and unwholesome things. Focusing on the single object firmly, initial application (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), the rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*) will arise in mind.²³ This happiness is not connected with the limited happiness. This is higher than that. No one can attain this happiness without renouncing limited happiness. This happiness is called the *Jāna* happiness (*jhāna sukha*).

Although *jhāna* happiness can suppress hindrances or defilements, it is easy to fall back from *jhāna* attainment. There are many *jātaka* stories in the Buddhist texts as examples of disappearing *jhāna* attainment. Because it can only suppress the hindrances or defilements. It cannot eliminate or eradicate them. If a meditator wants real happiness that cannot break, he must change his mind on the objects of ultimate realities (*paramattha*) through concept objects. It means a meditator must practice insight meditation. Only the insight knowledge associated with the supra-mundane consciousness can dispel the defilements step by step without remaining anything. Only then the happiness and peace be achieved completely. This insight meditation technique will be briefly explained under the instruction of Mahāsi Sayadaw well known as a meditation master in Myanmar.²⁴

VI. INSIGHT MEDITATION

If a meditator wants to undertake insight meditation, first of all, he must be able to differentiate concept and ultimate reality, and the object he focuses on must be ultimate reality (*Parramatta*), called mind and matter (*nāma rūpa*). In this technique, he does not have the chance to choose the desirable object as in the tranquility meditation. Instead, he must watch all as they are. Some meditator goes to this technique directly without establishing their mind on a single object. But it will take time to see the nature of mind and matter because of the disturbance of the unstable mind. Anyhow, the meditator must focus on mind and matter.

The Buddha mentioned four kinds of insight meditation objects in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*: body (*kāya*), feeling (*vedanā*), consciousness (*citta*), and *dhmma* (nature). From the standpoint of ultimate realities, body refers to matter (*rūpa*), feeling and consciousness refer to mind (*nāma*), and *dhmma* refers to both mind and matter (*nāma rūpa*). The meditator must watch the obvious one in his mind.²⁵

When the meditator watches the matters mindfully, he will come to know the

²³ V. I, 5.

²⁴ Bhaddanta Sobhana, Mahāsi Sayadaw, *A Practical Way of Vipassanā*, vol. I, II. Selangor: Buddhist Vipassanā Meditation Society, (2015).

²⁵ D. II. 231.

nature of changing such as itching, pain, heat, cold, hardness, softness, movement and so on. The nature of change can be seen in the matter. In that matter, there is no shape, no form, no knee, no thigh, no waist, no back, no leg, and no hand, etc. The meditator must differentiate the nature of matter from those shapes. If the meditator sees the sing, shape, form, etc, he sees just a concept that is not an insight meditation object. The object of meditation related to the matter is just the nature of changing with heat, cold, itching, etc. Therefore, the Buddha said in the *Mahāsatiipaṭṭhāna-sutta* that the meditator must see the body in the body. It means the meditator must see the matter as matter.²⁶

In the same way, when the meditator watches the feeling that arises in the mind, he will come to see the nature of pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*), and neutral experience (*upekkhā*). Those experiences are called feeling (*vedanā*) that arises through the connection of three phenomena in each organ. For example, in the eye door, three phenomena- eye, visible form, and eye consciousness meet together, and feeling arises from experiencing the object. If the object is good, the nature of pleasant feeling (*sukha vedanā*) will be experienced, if the object is bad, the nature of unpleasant feeling (*dukkha vedanā*) will be experienced and if the object is neither good nor bad, the nature of neutral (neither pleasant nor unpleasant) feeling (*upekkhā vedanā*) will be experienced.²⁷

Another object the meditator has to watch is the mind (*citta*). The mind is just knowing the object. Through knowing the objects, the mind becomes different. When the meditator watches the mind, he will come to know the mind with lust or without lust, with anger or without anger, with delusion or without delusion, with restlessness or without restlessness, and so on.²⁸ The last object the meditator must see is the nature of mind and matter. It is called a *dharmma* object. Although mind and matter have different names, they are the same under the nature of arising and disappearing. The meditator must know it.

The purpose of contemplating the body, feeling, consciousness, and *dharmma* is that greed, hatred, and ignorance cannot have the chance to arise in the body, feeling, and consciousness internally and externally.

The meditator should not choose the meditation objects, he must accept any object and just try to know its nature. No need to remove because of being bad or no need to please because of being good. He must just try to watch whatever appears. Then, he can differentiate mind and matter with insight and knowledge. After that, he will come to know the arising and disappearing of them. He just knows the nature of arising and disappearing. In his mind, there will be no longer name or label such as matter, feeling, mind and so on. Everything is disappearing at once after arising.

²⁶ D. II. 231.

²⁷ M. I. 158.

²⁸ D. II. 231.

He comes to know there is nothing to be attached to in the world. Like the bubble on the surface of the water, he couldn't hold or grasp anything. He just sees disappearing. He knows there is also no one to be loved or hated and everything in the world has nature of disappearing at once after arising. He knows the mind with hatred or the mind with love also arises and disappears at once without a gap. He has enjoyed and been pleased with new insight knowledge that has never arisen in his mind before. It will never fall back just as *jhāna* happiness.

Furthermore, the meditator will know that every mind and matter in the world are suffering because of disappearing. The suffering arises because of the attachment on them thinking that it cannot disappear. Since he knows nothing lasts long and all can disappear at once after arising, he no longer wants those mind and matter again, and he destroys all attachment to them. He is now free from suffering because of detachment from anything. He realizes the highest happiness that the Buddha refers to.

VII. CONCLUSION

Happiness and peace are like a coin with two sides. They are interrelated. Although people need them, they are further more than before because of defilements like Jealousy and stinginess, which arise together with anger or hatred. The Buddha didn't refer to material happiness or sensual happiness as real because it can be enjoyed temporarily. This happiness is surrounded by much dissatisfaction or suffering. To possess this happiness, many people are trying, arguing and fighting each other. The more they search for happiness, the further they become.

On the other hand, if anger arises in the mind, it not only causes happiness and peace to destroy but also attaches to something in the mind. Because of attachment to or desiring something, the mind hates or doesn't like present situations. This attachment is the major cause of fighting or conflicts. People can't have real happiness without renouncing their attachment to sensual happiness.

The causes of lacking real happiness and peace are greed, hatred and ignorance in mind. If people need happiness and peace, they must try to decrease or remove them in three ways: observing morality, practicing tranquility, and insight meditation. Observing morality prevents us from committing unlawful things. Tranquility meditation can only suppress or decrease the defilements to some extent, but it cannot remove or uproot them from the mind. Only insight meditation cannot only decrease the defilements but also can remove or uproot at all. Only when there is no defilement in mind the real happiness and peace be achieved. Therefore, people should always observe the five precepts and take the time every day for one hour or two hours to decrease or remove the defilements by practicing meditations.

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ZEN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CULTIVATION OF INNER PEACE: A PATHWAY TO EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING

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Abstract:

Buddhist psychology aims at two main goals: leading a healthy, ethical life and attaining *nibbāna*, the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*). In Japan, Buddhism is not just a religion but also a way of life, with Zen being one of its most prominent sects. Originating in China as the Chan School during the Tang dynasty, Zen later spread to Vietnam (*Thiền*), Korea (*Seon*), and Japan. Zen focuses on meditation (*zazen*), direct realization of Buddha-nature, and integrating this awareness into daily life. While some Zen traditions downplay doctrinal study, most still incorporate Buddhist practices such as chanting, monasticism, and scripture study.

Zen philosophy, influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, *Yogacara*, *Tathāgatagarbha*, and Daoist thought, emphasizes intrinsic enlightenment and sudden awakening. It has significant psychological implications, including non-attachment, mind-body unity, and the rejection of ego and conditioned illusions. Zen therapy helps reduce suffering by addressing faulty perception and promoting mindfulness. It views suffering as a result of attachment and misperception. Through *zazen*, practitioners develop a clear, present mind, recognizing the interconnectedness of all life. Zen Buddhist psychology thus serves as both a belief system and a cognitive framework for understanding human emotion, behavior, and motivation.

Keywords: *Zen Buddhism, Buddhist psychology, meditation, enlightenment, non-attachment, Daoist philosophy, Chan Buddhism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Under the psychological analysis of Buddhism, emotions, cognition, behavior, and motivation are adopted as the practice of the psychotherapeutic

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system. A distinctive feature of Buddhist psychology is that it is as much embedded in the Buddhist moral and philosophical system as possible, and the psychological terminology is replete with ethics.¹ Buddhist psychology has two therapeutic objectives, one is the health and virtuous life of the householder and the other is the complete elimination of dissatisfaction and suffering by achieving the ultimate goal of *Nirvāṇa*.² There are many parallel and overlapping points in the modern teaching of Buddhism and psychology. This includes the descriptive phenomenology of mental states, emotions and behaviors as well as the theory of cognition and unconscious mental factors. Psychiatrists such as Eric have found the potential for transformation, healing and finding existential meaning in the Buddhist experiences of enlightenment (Jp. Kensho). Some modern mental health practitioners such as Jon Kabat-Zinn increasingly find ancient Buddhist practices to have empirically proven therapeutic value, while Buddhist teachers such as Jack Kornfield offer Western psychology a complementary practice to Buddhism.³

The psychological elements in Buddhism have been present for over two thousand years. The evaluation of Buddhism in the context of modern psychology is certainly a new approach. The evaluation of Buddhism with modern psychology began when British Indologists began translating Buddhist texts from *Pāli* and Sanskrit, the modern development of Buddhism in the West and especially the development of Buddhist modernism around the world has involved comparative studies of European psychology and psychiatry with Buddhist theory and practice. According to the Austrian psychologist Gerald Virtbauer, the combination of Buddhism and European psychology has generally followed three main approaches.⁴

- (1) Presentation and exploration of parts of the Buddhist teachings as a psychological and psychotherapeutic method for the analysis and modification of human experience.
- (2) Integration of psychological or psychotherapeutic ideas already present in the Buddhist teachings (e.g., in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy).
- (3) Integration of Western psychological and social science knowledge with the Buddhist system (e.g., Buddhist modernism, Vipassana movement).

The psychology of Buddhism refers to traditional psychological techniques and applies the philosophy of mind, which has been used within Buddhism

¹ Padmasiri De Silva (1973). *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology*. 4th edition. Palgrave Macmillan. p. 3.

² *Ibid*, p. 107.

³ DeAngelis, T. (2014, February). *A blend of Buddhism and psychology*. *Monitor on Psychology*, 45(2), 64.

⁴ Virtbauer, G. (2011, November 9). *Buddhism as a Psychological System: Three Approaches* [Achived]. Wayback Machine.

Virtbauer, G. (2012). The Western reception of Buddhism as a psychological and ethical system: Developments, dialogues, and perspectives. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, p. 251 – 263.

for the past 2600 years, to help people overcome their suffering. Buddhism is not fundamentally a religion like other global theistic and spiritual traditions. A brief discussion of the psychology of early Buddhist teachings is limited to the available canons of the *Pāli*, which contain the Buddha's early Buddhist teachings, and also to the *Pāli* Buddhist canons of early Buddhist teachings, which include the *TriPiṭaka*. *TriPiṭaka*, in which the words of Buddha have been collected, has three parts under this collection, these three types of collections are called *TriPiṭaka*.

(1) *Sutta Piṭaka* - It includes the sermons given by Buddha during his 45 years and the discourses given by his followers.

(2) *Vinaya Piṭaka* - This *Piṭaka* describes the rules for monks and nuns who live in the Buddhist monastery (*Sangha*).

(3) *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* - This *Piṭaka* contains the philosophical and psychological analysis of the teachings of Buddhism.

In the '*Sutta Piṭaka*' we find a series of discourses of Lord Buddha containing many psychological contents. Lord Buddha, in his 45 years of preaching, has made people aware of mental health rather than physical health through his teachings. From a psychiatric point of view, Buddhism is completely a theory of psychiatry. Gomez has said, "Buddhism is a therapy, which is capable of eliminating a person's pain or his soul or mental disorder."⁵ According to Buddhism, to understand the ultimate goal of enlightenment, Deathrage believes that Buddhism provides two paths, one philosophy and the other direct therapeutic intervention. Deathrage writes that 'the Buddhist approach establishes logical principles and then directs a way to verify them personally. For example, the basic teachings of Buddhism, 'Four Noble Truths', observe that all things in the world are temporary, along with one's own life, and the impermanence of this physical world is the primary and direct cause of unhappiness.'⁶

A key feature of Buddhist psychology is its methodology, which is based on personal experience through introspection and phenomenal self-observation.⁷ According to the Buddha, one's mind, though initially unreliable, can be trained. It can be given the foundation of introspection through a calm and refined, reliable method. This methodology is the basis of personal insight into the nature of mind as spoken by the Buddha. Introspection is a major aspect of Buddhism; observation of one's behavior is an important part of it.⁸

⁵ Gómez, L. O. (2003). Psychology. In: R. E. Buswell Jr. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (Vol. 2, p. 678 - 692). New York: MacMillan Reference USA.

⁶ Deathrage, S., & Boorstein, G. O. (1982). *Buddhism in psychotherapy: Two essays* (p. 20). Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

⁷ De De Silva, P. (1973). *An introduction to Buddhist psychology* (4th ed.,). Palgrave Macmillan, p. 13

⁸ De Silva, P. (1973). *An introduction to Buddhist psychology* (4th ed.,) Palgrave Macmillan, p. 15

The early Buddhist texts propound a theory of consciousness and perception based on the Āyātana. The Āyātana comprises six senses, classified as sense organs, sense objects, and awareness. Interaction between these senses leads to a perceptual event. According to Buddhist texts, “the eye is an internal organ and as soon as an object comes within its range and when an action occurs that attracts the mind, perceptual consciousness arises.”⁹

The normal process of cognition is entangled with what the Buddhist term *papacca* (conceptual expansion) is, a distortion and extension of the cognitive process of natural sensation or feeling (*vedanā*).¹⁰ The process of informal interaction itself is traced back to the perceptual process. Therefore, for Buddhists, cognition is not just based on the senses, but also our desires, interests, and concepts. It is thus unreal and illusory.¹¹ The goal of Buddhist practice is to overcome these distractions and see things as they are (*yathabhūta-dassanam*).

This psycho-physical process is intertwined with psychological craving, psychic conceit and *drishti* (theory, idea). The Buddha believes that the concept of a ‘permanent and solid self’ or ‘pure ego’ is the most problematic idea. The main reason for this is that in early Buddhist psychology there is no concept of a definite self, but the concept of ‘self’ and attachment to the self-concept affects everyone’s behavior and leads to suffering.¹² For the Buddha there is no objective uniformity about the individual. There is only a changing stream of events and processes classified into five parts, called aggregates, which comprise the stream of consciousness (*viññāna-srotā*). A contemptible ego, insincere belief in and attachment to reality is the root of all negative emotions.

Buddha’s theory of human motivation is based on certain key factors shared by all human beings and mainly deals with the nature of human dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) and the means of overcoming it. In the Buddhist scriptures, *Suttas*, humans are described as being affected by three types of craving.

Kāma-taṇhā - craving for sensory gratification, sensuality, exotic excitement and pleasure.

Bhava thirst - craving for super-life or continued existence, including hunger, sleep, power, as well as wealth and fame.

Vibhava thirst - craving for destruction and non-existence, aggression and violence towards self and others.

These three fundamental factors are compared to Freudian theory of libido,

⁹ De Silva, P. (1973). *An introduction to Buddhist psychology* (4th ed.,) Palgrave Macmillan, p. 22

¹⁰ De Silva, P. (1990). Buddhist psychology: A review of theory and practice. *Current Psychology*, 9, p. 236 – 254.

¹¹ De Silva, P. (1973). *An introduction to Buddhist psychology*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 21

¹² De Silva, P. (1990). Buddhist psychology: A review of theory and practice. *Current Psychology*, 9, p. 236 – 254.

De Silva, P. (1973). *An introduction to Buddhist psychology*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 21.

ego, and Thanatos respectively.¹³ These three cravings represent reactions of emotional affect with hedonic overtones derived from pleasant and unpleasant feelings (*Vedanā*). The fixation or obsession for emotional dominance leads to a state of dissatisfaction and tension due to the vicious cycle of longing for the future and striving to achieve it. The Buddhist scriptures describe the three unhealthy roots (*Akusala Mula*) of suffering, negative emotions and behavior as *Raga* (lust), *Dosha* (hatred or aversion) and *Moha* (delusion).¹⁴ These unhealthy diseases are overcome by generosity, compassion, and wisdom.

Emotion or emotional response (*Vedanā*) also has its source depending on the emotion and is classified in various ways, such as physical or mental, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral and rooted in different senses.¹⁵ The Buddha himself distinguishes between worldly and supernatural or spiritual emotion and considers spiritual emotion to be superior. Along with these basic immediate reactions, complex emotions emerge as a result of situational context, perception, and personal history, such as fear, hatred, hope or despair. The Buddhist theory of emotions also touches upon the ethical and spiritual significance of positive emotions such as compassion and friendship as antidotes to negative emotions and as a means of self-development. According to Padmasiri de Silva, in the early Buddhist texts emotions are divided into four groups, "those that interfere with the pursuit of religious life as pursued by the layman, emotions that interfere with the pursuit of the path of perfection, emotions that enhance the pursuit of religious life by the layman, and emotions that are cultivated by the monk who seeks the path of perfection".¹⁶

The study of Zen Buddhism psychology can be divided into four parts. "The first part can be kept from 1829 to 1940. Till that time, there was no differentiation between Zen and Zazen and the period of the second part is considered from 1950. At that time, there was confusion about the research of Zen Buddhism. During this period, the discussion of Zen psychotherapy started. The third part is from 1969 to 1977, during this period, the psychological approach of Zen Buddhism has been studied. The fourth part starts in 1978, during this period Akishige¹⁷ established the concept of Zen psychology."¹⁸

"The first contact of Zen Buddhism with modern psychology began with the publication of "Psychology of Zen Sect" by Inoue Enryō.¹⁹ This was probably the first article on Zen and psychology. He founded a philosophical institute which was known as "Tetsugaku-kan" and today is known as Toyo

¹³ Padmasiri De Silva (1973). *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology*. p. 1

¹⁴ Padmal Silva. (1990). *Buddhist psychology: A review of theory and practice; Current Psychology Vol. 9*, p. 236 - 254.

¹⁵ Padmasiri De Silva. (1973). *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology*. p. 41.

¹⁶ Padmasiri De Silva. (1973). *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology*. p. 41.

¹⁷ Akishige has published a paper called "Psychological Studies On Zen" on the "psychological studies of Zen Buddhism".

¹⁸ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 125.

¹⁹ Inoue Enryō was a Japanese philosopher, Buddhist reformer, and royalist.

University.²⁰ In this published article, Inoue has explained the wisdom from a psychological point of view. In this article, Inoue has explained that wisdom through meditation in Zen Buddhism helps to stop emotion and desire. In 1895, Yojiro Motora, who founded the psychological laboratory at Tokyo University, wrote a daily letter after meditating for a week at Enkakuji, a temple of Rinzai Buddhism.²¹ In this paper he spent an entire day trying to understand the workings of the mind while meditating with the koan statement “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” While meditating on this question, Yojiro Motora thought of several answers that would prove his enlightenment and enable him to pass the oral examination. He failed this process fifteen times and finally passed with the help of a Zen master’s hint. He later emphasizes that Zen is not unknowable but logical and cannot be taught by a master but can only be understood through personal experience. Yojiro Motora’s experience of Zen practice had a profound influence on Japanese thought and psychological theory. In 1905, Yojiro Motora presented a paper at the Fifth International Psychological Congress in Rome, in which he presented a psychological analysis he had gained from his experience of Zen practice.²²

The first psychological approach to Zen Buddhism appeared in 1920, when Toshio Iritani presented empirical evidence by conducting questionnaires on 430 people and interviewing more than 10 people. In this process, he used valuable letters written by 195 Zen masters. Through a method of questionnaires, interviews, and letters, he tried to show how mental processes are involved in the experience of enlightenment and what physical and mental activities are like when you reach this goal.

The articles presented by Ataka are based on psychological communication, his articles are mainly focused on two topics: (a) Involvement of psychological method in attaining enlightenment, (b) Psychological situation after attaining enlightenment. Kuroda has divided the Zen psychological approach into two parts, the first is the linguistic analysis of the results of the questionnaire. The second is to research the experience of the physical response, especially the process of breathing and other bodily movements, after the implementation of stimulation during Zen practice. Kuroda also paid attention to the two different aspects of the psychological approach of Zen and the psychological study of Zen. In his opinion, the first method is objective, while the second aims to explain the mental situation after attaining enlightenment. After Kuroda, the study of Zen and the study of Zazen started becoming separate.

In the early 1950s, two Western psychoanalysts, Karen Horney and Eric Fromm, became interested in Eastern philosophy, particularly Zen philosophy. Horney traveled to Japan in 1952 with D.T. Suzuki (a well-known Zen preacher in the West). During their trip to Japan they met Kora Takehisa, a leading proponent of Morita therapy. Morita therapy was founded by Dr. Morita

²⁰ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 126.

²¹ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 126.

²² Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 127.

Shoma and later developed by Dr. Kora, who treated paranoid, neurotic, and paranoid patients at Jikei University.²³ Morita therapy focuses not on helping a person eliminate anxiety but on accepting similar anxiety through Zen meditation and participating positively in daily life.

In 1957 K. Sato published an article named “Psychologia: A International Journal of Psychology in the Orient”. Through this article, he presented psychology as a subject of study in Asia. Because of this article, he got famous all over the world, and this fame was not only for the general psychology of Asian countries, but he did a psychological study of the philosophy of Eastern countries and presented his views on it in the English language. Famous psychologists like Berner (1959), Fromm (Fromm 1959, 1967) and Jung (Jung 1960) also contributed by publishing their papers in “Psychologia”. A special edition of this paper was published from 1958 to 1961 under the name “Psychotherapies in East and West”. “Psychology” In the same year (1957) of the publication of the paper, a symposium on Zen and psychoanalysis was held in Mexico. At this symposium Suzuki and Fromm delivered lectures and were published in 1960.

In 1958, Hisamatsu Shinichi, a Zen philosopher, went to Jung to discuss Zen and psychology. Some of his papers were published based on this discussion. Contacts between various psychologists and psychoanalysts and the publication of ‘Psychologia’ by the Zen master helped Sato to summarize the study of Zen and psychology. In this publication, Sato’s study of Zen and psychology resulted in six perspectives. The first is the phenomenological perspective of Zen experience. Here it is advised to study each stage of the mental state separately. This perspective includes the process of attaining enlightenment. After studying the experience of the ‘self’, self-realization occurs. The second perspective is the study of the behavior and personality of a Zen master or martial artist such as a Japanese archery master. The third approach is the general semantics approach, which is the study of Zen practice, especially based on koan expressions.²⁴ The fourth approach is psychophysics, which uses electroencephalogram (EEG). It uses the autonomic balance theory. This approach includes both phasic factor and tonic factor. The fifth approach is psychotherapeutic. It incorporates Zen theory as a form of psychotherapy. For example, Morita therapy and psychoanalytic or existential approach have been adopted in Zen Buddhism philosophy. The last and sixth approach is to generate people’s interest in Zen practice. Also, it is believed that through the papers published in recent years, Sato has turned the study of Zen and psychology towards the psychological study of Zen.

II. PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ZEN BUDDHISM

The second period of the study of Zen and psychology begins in the mid-twentieth century. There is a difference between Zen being studied by a Zen

²³ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 127.

²⁴ A koan is a riddle or puzzle that Zen Buddhists use during meditation to help them discover greater truths about the world and about themselves.

master personally and Zen being studied by an individual. There is a difference in the mental state of a person leading a monastic life on one hand and a person during Zen meditation on the other because of the various activities they engage in and the effects of these activities on their personality, behavior, emotions, motivation, cognition and mental state. During these periods, the period of the 1960s achieved the most achievements in the study of Zen and psychology through physiological approaches such as EEG, electromyography, galvanic skin response, respiration, pulse rate plethysmogram, minor tremor, etc. However, only recently have attempts been made to introduce neuroscientific approaches to the study of Zen. Arita (2001) hypothesized that the changes in the body and mind seen when practicing zazen can be explained by the activation of serotonin, a biogenic amino acid released during breathing while doing zazen.²⁵

Austin, a neuroscientist and Zen practitioner, published a book in 1998 called "Zen and the Brain", which uses Zen Buddhism as a springboard for an unusually broad explanation of consciousness. Further writings by Higuchi, Kotani, Minegishi and Momose provide interesting records of measuring the activity of natural killer whales in captivity. Chihara's series of studies on Zen and the experience of time is also a unique experiment. Because research on time theory and ontology is one of the fundamental problems of Zen. Although EEG was not reported in his study, time was underestimated during zazen.²⁶

Psycho physiological approaches to Zen are very useful because they were the result of the accumulation of research on the subject. In this regard, the study of the poem with the picture of 10 bulls painted by the Zen master Kaonan Shih-yüan during the period 960-1126 AD is also a unique approach, it does not use zazen meditation.²⁷ Nakamura believes that in order to understand the mechanism of Zen, one's proper discharge of daily activities in the monastery is more important than knowing one's state of mind while practicing Zen meditation. Daily life spent in the monastery is considered to be part of the education system for monks in order to achieve satori or enlightenment, the ultimate goal of religious experiences.

III. IMPORTANCE OF META-SCIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND ZEN PSYCHOLOGY

Under this, details are available about the importance of meta-science of psychology. "Nakamura's article "A Review of the Psychological Research On Meditation That can be observed Through Psyc LIT" (1998) attempts to find new research methods by examining the database of general abstracts. In this article, 104 keywords related to meditation were selected and retrieved from the 1978 published articles of Psy Lit with the keyword "meditation". Each keyword was related to meditation, such as meditation technique, area of research in psychology, various psychological indexes, mechanism of

²⁵ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

²⁶ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

²⁷ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

meditation, psychotherapy, effect of meditation, variety of personality traits, and some questionnaires. In all, there are 994 entries. The number of articles and the percentage of each keyword are all reported.²⁸

From the perspective of meta-science of psychology, Watanabe's three-person psychology is useful to cope with the study of Zen. Three-person psychology is composed of first, second, and third person psychology. First person psychology reveals and describes the structure of conscious experience through introspection. Second person psychology attempts to understand and explain the symbolic connotations through various human activities and expressions by using interpretation. Third person psychology explains the behavioral laws of organisms as well as human beings by using the natural scientific method. Typical first person psychology is consciousness psychology or introspection psychology. Comprehensive psychology or psychoanalysis partly represents second person psychology. Third person psychology derives the meaning of modern scientific psychology by using the test method.

Empirical psychology, like self-reflection or self-realization, developed in the early prehistoric period, this empirical method of meditation is still practiced in the present times, mostly after the advent of scientific psychology. Buddhism has a well-developed classification system for the mind, divided into eight stages.²⁹ The conscious and unconscious states are known as "*Manas Consciousness*" and "*Store Consciousness*", which are divided into eight stages. (Table-4)

Table-4. Eight levels of consciousness and unconscious

Pancha Vigyan The five consciousness of the organ of the body First six consciousnesses of the eight consciousnesses

Manas Vigyan The thought-consciousness Sixth consciousness out of the eight consciousnesses

Manas Vigyan The *manas*-consciousness Seventh consciousness out of the unconscious

Alay Vigyan The store-consciousness Eighth consciousness out of the eight consciousnesses

The movement of the mind from the moment of feeling the stimulus to developing the consciousness of the stimulus is also divided into four stages. "Compared to sensation, cognition and perception in psychology, Buddhism has Sanskrit words *Vedanā* (Sensation), *Samjñā* (Perception), *Samskāra* (Will) and *Vijñāna* (A Mental Quality as a constituent of Indivisuality). The importance of First Person Psychology is to deal with direct experiences and not to convert them into objectively indexed verbal form or to represent them as numerical values. Direct experiences are original and singular and they are not experienced twice. Researchers like Motohara, K. Sato, Akishige, Onda and Nakamura realized the importance of First Person Psychology very well

²⁸ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

²⁹ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

and they had many direct experiences through Zen”³⁰

The approach of Second Person Psychology is also important to know the real person in front of you. This description is not to diminish the importance of Third Person Psychology, but to reiterate the importance of using all aspects of Third Person Psychology. It is believed that each person will get a different result of Third Person Psychology. The concept of ‘Dependent Origination’ is also called the Cause-Causality method or ‘*Idampratiyata*’. The basis of this theory is causality, there is no effect without cause and no cause without effect, cause and effect complement each other. This is the core and a central concept of Buddhism. These concepts are different from the causal relationship, which can be expressed through Third Person Psychology. Thus “First Person Psychology” and “Second Person Psychology” are as important as “Third Person Psychology”. Hence all three are necessary to understand physical, psychological, and spiritual existence. It is widely accepted that Hirai and his associates started the scientific study of psychology and Zen by using EEG.³¹ K. Sato and Akishige were prominent among the researchers in this regard, as they organized a project team for the study of Zen and spread it around the world by publishing books and the journal “Psychologia”. Both K. Sato and Akishige also showed keen interest in establishing Zen as a form of psychotherapy.

The psychosomatic approach to Zen has expanded the knowledge of the subject and there is no doubt that this important subject will influence future studies. It should also be mentioned that the goal of Zen followers is to practice zazen as well as the daily life of a monastic. In addition, a full third person psychology should be used for a comprehensive understanding of Zen. Researchers studying meditation need to know the difference between *Vipassanā* (Mindful Meditation) and Zen (Concentrated Meditation) in order to understand the true nature of meditation. Researchers dedicated to the study of meditation with third person psychology should recognize that the goal of studying meditation is not simply to discover effects such as deep concentration, relaxation, and psychotherapy. Our real goal is not only to understand the mechanism of Zen meditation, but to understand our spiritual nature and realize it in daily life.

IV. EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF ZEN MEDITATION

Empirical studies of Zen were pioneered by Chijo Iritani (1887 - 1957).³² Using questionnaires as well as religious talks and traditional readings of Zen idioms, he studied the goals of Zen practice through his experience of Zen meditation. He became aware of concrete strategies for the cessation of mind-wandering during Zen meditation, deepening of breathing, and the emptiness of both subject and object in *samādhi*. There is individual variation in enlightenment and this variation increases after enlightenment. He mentions

³⁰ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

³¹ Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

³² Hiroki Kato. (2005). *Zen and Psychology*. p. 131.

psychological benefits of Zen meditation such as mental stabilization, non-attachment, optimism, and increased willpower.

Kanae Sakuma (1888 - 1970) predicted that "the study of Zen electroencephalograms will reveal the emergence of alpha waves during trance." Provoked by this prediction, Tomio Hirai verified this prediction experimentally more than twenty years later, he demonstrated that Zen meditation causes changes in the electroencephalogram, so Zen meditation also has an effect on consciousness. Sakuma himself organized the project 'Medical Psychological Studies of Zen' in 1961 - 62, which is the first scientific study of Zen in the world. Sakuma coined the term 'Kicho-Ishiki' as the basic consciousness to describe the state of consciousness in meditation, characterizing it as a quasi-homogeneous period or quasi-constant flow.³³ For this he did not limit himself to Zen, but discussed forms of meditation practiced in other Buddhist schools, Christian mystical experiences, and the merits and demerits of artistic creation. Hence it has some universality. Sakuma further showed that the functional significance of meditative experience consists in self-control, although such self-control is different from the strengthening of the ego according to psychoanalysis. Becoming aware of the True Self or returning to the Original Self provides the basis for a glimpse of insight amid difficulties. Sakuma's study succeeded in creating a tradition within Japanese psychology led by Yoshiharu Akishige, Shoji Nakamura, and others.

In Buddhism, the first duty of a person is the ritual of his intellectual purification. For this, a person has to purify the mental impurities of desire, hatred, and delusion contained within him. By removing this mental impurity, a person plays an important role in making a positive impact on himself as well as others in the society, i.e. in the lives of other people. When we follow the path of the four noble truths, we gradually start feeling that the desire in the form of desire prevailing in our lives starts decreasing and at the same time the feeling of happiness and satisfaction starts increasing. We can achieve this happiness and satisfaction by following the excellent qualities of Buddhism - *karma*, charity, morality, and emotion. By adopting the ten *paramita*-s of Buddhism (charity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, courage, peace, truth, *adhishtana*, friendship and *upekshna*), we can benefit ourselves as well as others by increasing our intellectual wealth. Buddhism and Sangha provide us with the ability to awaken the feeling of happiness and security.

Samādhi (meditation) is the foundation of Zen Buddhism, the literal meaning of Zen is to meditate. In Zen Buddhist philosophy, *samādhi* is both the path and the goal. The goal of Zen is to attain *samādhi*. Zen Buddhism is mainly divided into two parts, that is, there are two schools of thought in Zen sect, one school of thought emphasizes on sudden enlightenment, while the other believes in attaining it gradually, in the sect that attains enlightenment gradually, only sitting and practicing Zen meditation is done, which is called Zazen. The Zen sect that

³³ Young-Eisendrath, P., & Muramoto, S. (Eds.). (2005). *Awakening and Insight: Zen Buddhism and Psychotherapy*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, p. 241.

attains enlightenment suddenly believes that attaining enlightenment is possible, for this, *koans* and questionnaires are used by this sect.

The first step to understanding Zen philosophy is to restrain the mind through meditation and thereby mold the mind and body in a technique that fills the mind with logical thoughts and keeps it away from false thoughts.

Zen Buddhists use relatively less religious texts as a process of studying philosophy. Instead, Zen Buddhists use various methods of Zen meditation practice. Zen Buddhists try to achieve enlightenment in philosophy. The most common way to achieve enlightenment in Zen Buddhist philosophy was to establish direct communication between the master and the disciple. The main goal of practicing Zen philosophy is to sharpen the logical and intellectual mind, which helps its followers to become aware and understand the 'Buddha nature' present within them. The Zen sect paves the way for the followers to achieve enlightenment without adopting any additional path, but paves the way for them to achieve it through the work they are engaged in, and for this they do not need any special philosophical thoughts or intellect.

The practice of Zen Buddhist philosophy begins with faith in oneself. Only a person who has full faith in his mental ability is successful in Zen meditation. This faith should be maintained till the end of Zen Buddhist meditation. The meaning in which faith is expressed in Zen Buddhism is different from the meaning of faith in other religions. In other religions, faith is expressed in some 'supreme power' and its qualities, actions and essence, whereas in Buddhism, faith and belief in oneself has been adopted through self-realization through Zen Buddhist meditation. According to the teachings of *Tathagata Buddha*, every creature in the world has a Buddha nature within it, which helps them to attain enlightenment. No person can realize the state of mind of Buddha until he awakens the 'Buddha nature' within himself. In Buddhism, faith in the 'supreme power' means awakening the 'Buddha nature' i.e. awakening the mind. Therefore, we can awaken it through self-realization.

The important step of Zen Buddhism philosophy is doubt. Zen philosophy is a very scientific method. Just as science believes in experimentally proven alternatives, similarly Zen Buddhism also believes in self-proven alternatives. According to Gautam Buddha, every human being has 'Buddha nature'. If we believe in this statement, then where is the 'Buddha nature'? We should search for it and search for it until we find it, and in this way we can remove our doubts.

Another basic step of Zen Buddhism philosophy is determination. By practicing Zen meditation, we become determined. According to Zen Buddhist philosophy, the practice of meditation makes us determined. By determination, we struggle and work hard, as a result of which we become disciplined and restrained. In Zen Buddhist philosophy, by practicing meditation, we will feel and experience it in its true form, by constantly practicing Zen meditation, our personality will move from good to better, and by reaching the highest level of self-realization, we will achieve enlightenment. The most important thing in all this is that all these changes are possible through our efforts.

To follow the path of Zen Buddhism, it is essential to imbibe four important elements. These four important elements of Zen Buddhism are practice, wisdom, compassion, and enlightenment. The main objective of meditation practice of Zen Buddhism is to liberate man from the entanglements of social, mental, and physical issues. Zen Buddhism gives importance to 'experience' through the practice of Zazen. Under Zazen practice, we take a straight posture and practice breathing slowly with partially open eyes. During this time, various thoughts will come and go in the mind, but by taking the same posture and practicing continuously, concentration gradually returns and gradually "meditation" starts deepening. In this way, with continuous practice by the person, the person gets freedom from contemplative thoughts and enters the experience of the immediate state of mind. Zen Buddhist philosophy believes that the practice of Zen Buddhist meditation is completely subjective, the only way to experience it is to discipline oneself and follow it in a disciplined manner. By practicing this process continuously, we can achieve enlightenment. During the practice of Zen Buddhist meditation, a person gets a feeling of knowledge of his 'self'. After the knowledge of this 'self', the person moves away from the dualistic subject matter present within him and enters the open field of his experience. Therefore, through experience and its expansion, he gets acquainted with the underlying object of his experience. This type of enlightenment (knowledge) is the beginning of the awakening of the mind.

Zen Buddhism is not in favour of doing sadhana by fixing time in its philosophy. It believes that the true nature of sadhana is that which is spontaneous and inherent. This sadhana cannot be expressed, that is, one becomes detached from the world automatically. This is inherent sadhana. In this way, the subject of mind and person comes to an end and their existence dissolves in the "absolute void".

Buddhism is also called scientific religion, in which the truth of the results obtained by one's experiments is accepted. The field of science of Buddhism is mind, hence it is also called psychological religion. The main subject of Zen Buddhism is mind and its thoughts. Under Zen Buddhism, by practising meditation, the thoughts of the mind are purified by going deep into them. A distinctive feature of the psychology of Zen Buddhist philosophy is that its psychological thinking is full of morality. The subject of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* in the *TriPiṭakas* is based on psychological events. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* contains a psychological outline of moral behavior along with the theory of mental emotions and personality types.

The philosophy of Zen Buddhism is completely empirical. In this, the nature-process of the object is studied minutely by oneself. In Zen Buddhist philosophy, it is essential to follow three important steps to attain enlightenment. The first step is the practice of Zazen. Through Zazen, the saint and his followers practice "meditation" by sitting in the "lotus posture". Through this practice, the seeker tries to experience the "Buddha nature". The second step is *Koan*. An attempt is made to understand the ultimate truths through *Koan*. *Koan* is a method of getting answers to the ultimate questions arising within oneself in

a question-answer style. In the third step, the seeker practices Zazen with the Zen *Guru* and tries to find solutions to the questions raised by the *Koan*. In this last step, the *Guru* monitors his disciple to see if his disciple is on the right path or not. Zen Buddhist philosophy believes that a person should try to know the ultimate truth through the experience of his efforts.

Therefore, the psychological approach of Zen Buddhism has kept itself relevant even in the present times by assimilating modernity. Zen Buddhism includes mental, physical, philosophical, and spiritual perspectives in itself. Zen Buddhism purifies the thoughts of a person, that is, it tries to remove misconceptions. In which it encourages to remain engaged in the search of “ultimate truth” by calling worldly things temporary. The most important feature of Zen Buddhism is that meditation is practiced to awaken one’s original nature by concentrating oneself. Continuous practice of meditation awakens the mind. An awakened mind gives us right view. Right view makes us ideologically strong. When our thoughts are strong, then self-confidence is rekindled in us, this self-confidence proves to help attain the ultimate truth. The principle of Zen Buddhism is completely practical, that is why even an ordinary man can easily connect himself with it. A person who believes in Zen Buddhism, by practising meditation continuously, gets involved in every work with concentration, and this concentration always remains with him in every moment of his life. In Zen Buddhism, morality, samadhi, and wisdom are used as an important means. The follower of Zen Buddhism, keeping in mind the moral values, executes his work with concentration and tries to complete that work, which reflects morality, samadhi, and wisdom respectively, in accordance with the basic teachings of Buddhism. In the present times, the use of Zen Buddhism as modern psychology shows its relevance. Morita and Naikan therapy are the modern forms of Zen Buddhism philosophy, in which efforts are made to remove the mental disorders of man. Therefore, along with strengthening the civilization and culture of Japan, its use as mental therapy shows its extreme uniqueness. In this way, Zen Buddhism is completely a psychological religion in both theoretical and practical forms. The principles of Zen Buddhism are relevant even in the present times as they can be practically followed by the general public.

Zen psychology, rooted in the principles of Zen Buddhism, defines inner peace as a state of deep harmony, presence, and acceptance of reality as it is. Unlike Western psychological models that often focus on analyzing past experiences or planning for the future, Zen emphasizes direct experience of the present moment without judgment or attachment. Inner peace, in the Zen perspective, arises naturally when the mind is free from grasping, aversion, and delusion.

Zen teaches that suffering (*dukkha*) arises from clinging to desires, outcomes, or identities. Inner peace is cultivated by letting go of attachments and accepting impermanence (*anicca*), fostering a state of mental equanimity. The practice of seated meditation, or zazen, cultivates mindfulness and a direct encounter with the present moment. Zen psychology asserts that true peace is found in

fully experiencing each moment without distraction or mental proliferation. The concept of emptiness suggests that all things are interdependent and lack inherent, fixed identity. Recognizing this interconnectedness helps dissolve rigid self-concepts and anxieties, leading to a more fluid, peaceful existence. Inner peace is achieved by fully embracing reality as it unfolds, rather than resisting or wishing it were different. Zen encourages a mindset of radical acceptance, which helps individuals respond to life with greater clarity and calmness. Cultivating a beginner's mind - a mindset of openness, curiosity, and a lack of preconceptions - allows individuals to engage with life without the burden of expectations, leading to a more peaceful and receptive attitude. Zen psychology promotes simplicity in both external life and internal thought processes. Reducing mental clutter and unnecessary distractions allows for a greater sense of inner stillness and contentment.

V. ZEN PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

(1) Meditation (Zazen): Regular meditation fosters deep awareness, concentration, and insight, leading to mental clarity and emotional stability. By observing thoughts without attachment, practitioners develop inner calm and resilience.

(2) Mindful Breathing (Anapanasati: Focusing on the breath as an anchor to the present moment helps quiet the mind and create a sense of centeredness, promoting tranquility amidst daily challenges.

(3) Koan Practice: Zen practitioners often engage with koans (paradoxical questions or statements) to break habitual patterns of thinking and achieve direct insight into reality, fostering a profound sense of peace and understanding.

(4) Walking Meditation (Kinhin): Practicing mindful walking allows individuals to integrate mindfulness into daily life, promoting a sense of grounded presence and relaxation.

(5) Silent Observation (Shikantaza; "just sitting"): In this form of meditation, practitioners sit without trying to achieve anything, simply observing their thoughts and sensations with acceptance and non-judgment. This practice fosters a deep sense of peace and contentment.

(6) Psychological Benefits of Zen Practices: Modern psychology acknowledges several benefits of Zen practices in promoting mental well-being and inner peace, including:

- Reduction in stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Improved emotional regulation and resilience.
- Enhanced self-awareness and acceptance.
- Greater focus, clarity, and cognitive flexibility.

Zen psychology defines inner peace as the result of living in the present moment with acceptance, non-attachment, and mindfulness. Through practices such as meditation, mindfulness, and a simplified approach to life, individuals can cultivate a deep and enduring sense of inner peace that transcends external circumstances. Zen-based practices, rooted in mindfulness, meditation, and

simplicity, offer profound long-term psychological benefits. These practices emphasize present-moment awareness, non-attachment, and acceptance, leading to lasting mental and emotional well-being. Over time, adopting Zen principles fosters a deep transformation in cognitive and emotional processes, promoting resilience and inner peace.

VI. CONCLUSION

So adopting Zen-based practices offers profound and lasting psychological benefits, from stress reduction and emotional resilience to enhanced cognitive function and compassionate living. By cultivating mindfulness, non-attachment, and acceptance, individuals can achieve a deep and enduring sense of inner peace and overall well-being. Over time, these practices not only transform personal mental health but also contribute to a more compassionate and sustainable society.

Zen psychology, deeply rooted in the principles of Zen Buddhism, offers a transformative approach to achieving inner peace and emotional resilience. Unlike conventional Western psychological models that focus on analyzing past experiences or future anxieties, Zen emphasizes direct engagement with the present moment through mindfulness, non-attachment, and radical acceptance. By cultivating awareness, individuals learn to let go of conditioned thoughts and emotional reactivity, leading to a state of equanimity and psychological well-being.

The foundation of Zen-based practices lies in meditation (*zazen*), mindful breathing, koan practice, walking meditation, and silent observation. These methods not only foster deep self-awareness and cognitive flexibility but also serve as powerful tools for stress reduction, emotional stability, and mental clarity. The emphasis on simplicity, acceptance, and interconnectedness enables practitioners to navigate life's challenges with greater ease and resilience.

As modern psychology increasingly integrates Zen principles, research continues to validate the therapeutic benefits of mindfulness, meditation, and non-attachment in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. The Zen perspective of self as an impermanent, interdependent phenomenon challenges rigid ego constructs, allowing for a more fluid and adaptive engagement with reality. Through disciplined practice, individuals experience a profound shift in perception, moving from self-centered striving to a harmonious state of being.

In essence, Zen psychology provides a pathway to sustainable inner peace by fostering a direct, experiential understanding of the mind. By embracing mindfulness and simplicity, individuals not only cultivate personal well-being but also contribute to a more compassionate, balanced, and mindful society. The timeless wisdom of Zen continues to resonate in contemporary mental health practices, offering a holistic and enduring approach to cultivating emotional resilience and psychological harmony.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: DHARMA THERAPY THE PATHWAY TO ELEVATING SELF-MOTIVATION

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Abstract:

Buddhism is founded to solve human suffering. The multiplication of human psychological problems in the internet age could provide solace. The Dhamma Therapy is based on the problem-focused solution of applied Buddhism to existential issues. The therapeutic intervention of Dhamma Therapy is utilized to ease human suffering. With such a practical Buddhist model approach, this writing is focused on enhancing motivation using Dhamma Therapy. The present case study has shown the client's issue of motivation, which produces suffering in his life. It attempts to strengthen motivation using the seven steps of Dhamma Therapy, which provides some solutions for enhancing motivation to pursue spiritual cultivation and learn new skills for personal well-being.

Keywords: *Dharma therapy, self-motivation, mindfulness, applied Buddhism, spiritual cultivation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Dhamma therapy intervention aims to enhance self-motivation for happiness and to inspire others. While conducting the case study using Dhamma therapy, the research examined various conditional factors for improving self-motivation in Buddhist literature. Once he gains a theoretical foundation in self-motivation and Dhamma therapy, he can cultivate his self-motivation and inspire others. This study introduces the Buddhist concept of motivation according to Theravāda texts and relevant research materials. Some significant Buddhist terms that serve as sources of motivation in our lives for both short-term and long-term goals will be presented. Motivation is defined as the effort to achieve intended goals. It may involve short-term goals, such as learning psychology or acquiring specific skills, and long-term goals, such as transforming

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unwholesome behaviors. In particular, when we set long-term goals in life, we must work continuously to achieve them. To maintain our commitment to these goals, motivation is essential. Without strong motivation, we cannot acquire new skills or achieve success in life, which ultimately contributes to the well-being of both ourselves and others. The primary reasons for focusing on self-motivation are to enhance personal spiritual cultivation and to make an effective contribution to society by alleviating people's suffering through various social activities. Through self-motivation, one can cultivate wholesome qualities; as a result, he becomes more compassionate and productive for both himself and others. He can also transform and refine undesirable behaviors into virtuous ones by encouraging himself to set ambitious goals, thereby fostering effort to develop inner peace and concentration. Furthermore, when motivated, he finds inspiration to acquire essential skills for teaching Dhamma to others. Consequently, he experiences profound satisfaction in accomplishing such meaningful endeavors.

II. THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF MOTIVATION

Motivation has various definitions, often shaped by the context in which it is studied. However, it generally refers to concepts related to contemporary relevant terms. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology, "motivation is the process or action of convincing others to make an effort to pursue a goal."¹ Some define motivation in terms of an increased desire to attain or avoid a particular outcome, while others describe it as heightened energy or effort exerted at a specific moment or sustained over time.² Although motivation can be examined from various disciplinary perspectives, researchers commonly agree that it plays a crucial role in initiating, directing, and maintaining behavior.³ It would be difficult to find a word for motivation in Buddhist literature. However, it does not mean that the concept of motivation is unfamiliar in Buddhism. There are still a few scholarly writings from the Buddhist perspective. Padmasiri dedicates a short chapter on motivation in his book, "An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counseling." His primary focus in this chapter is the nature of human motivation and their understanding to find the ways to alleviate human suffering (*dukkha*).⁴ He advocates three main aspects of behavioral motivation: the states that motivate behavior, the behavior driven by these states, and the goals of such behaviors.⁵ This is an example of the three aspects of behavior, "Hunger as a motivational state would impel a person to seek food; appropriate behavior, which is instigated by this need, would be seeking a means to attain this end, and the alleviation of hunger would be the final goal."⁶ This is a cyclic process. His analysis of motivation in

¹ David, *Dictionary of Psychology*, (2009): 319.

² Michael Richter, *Motivation*, (2017): 87.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Padmasiri, *Buddhist Psychology & Counseling*, (2014): 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

this regard could relate to the modern psychological perspective of motivation. When we search for an intended goal, we approach it in three ways until our goal is met. The source of motivation for pursuing our goal requires us to spring from our mind. Padmasiri de Silva found that craving (*taṇhā*) has a greater psychological orientation compared to physiological drives.⁷ Drives could be both physiological and psychological. For example, a statement is found in the Khuddakapāṭha, “All living beings depend on nutriment.”⁸ Physiological drive constitutes the necessity of food for physical survival. Therefore, it is undeniable that nutrition is essential to support the physical body. It motivates us to seek food when our body requires nourishment. When it comes to psychological drive, there are various goals. Hence, understanding the psychological drive is more essential and yet complex. The initial factor of the psychological drive is craving; when a person wishes to become an engineer, the craving becomes his driving force. However, one requires other crucial elements to accomplish one’s desire through appropriate behaviors. As a result, one will attain his goal in his life by following such appropriate behaviors. Intimating material phenomena (*viññatti*) is a way to express our intention. The definition of *viññatti* is using which one communicates one’s ideas, feelings, and attitudes to one another.⁹ In the *Abhidhamma*, two kinds of intimations are given to convey our intention through: physical (*kāya-viññatti*) and verbal intimations (*vacī-viññatti*). When we relate intention with motivation, it aims to convey our intention in our behaviors. The terms for bodily intimation and verbal intimation belong to the materiality group. They are produced by the co-nascent intention and are, therefore, as such, purely physical.¹⁰ When we intend to accomplish an intended dream, the intention translates into physical intention. Thus, there is a close relationship between motivation and intimations in completing our intended goals. Moreover, we also could see how verbal intimation is conducive to commitment and promise. When we verbally express our goals to others, we commit with motivation to pursue our goals. Eventually, verbal intimation is perhaps considered a vital source of motivation for doing good work based on personal experience.

III. FOUNDATIONAL BUDDHIST TERMS FOR SELF-MOTIVATION

This section focuses on some factors from the Buddhist perspective that contribute to enhancing motivation, which could be recognized as the bedrock for accomplishing any goals in our lives. Firstly, determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*) is essential in self-motivation to accomplish our goal. Determination of the meaning of decision and determination to complete assigned work. It is also regarded as one of the ten perfections in Theravāda tradition. There are four kinds of determination stated in the *Saṅgīti Sutta* (DN 33). They are determined to gain wisdom (*paññā*), truth (*sacca*), relinquishment (*cāga*),

⁷ Padmasiri, *Buddhist Psychology & Counseling*, (2014): 31.

⁸ *Khp*, 2: *Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā*.

⁹ Bodhi, *Manual of Abhidhamma*, (2007): 241.

¹⁰ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary*, (2006): 196.

and tranquillity (*upasama*).¹¹ One of the most inspiring quotes of the Buddha is about determination before attaining his enlightenment. The Buddhavaṃsa states: a mountain, a rock, stable and firmly based, does not tremble in rough winds but remains in precisely its place, so you too must be constantly stable in resolute determination; going on to the perfection of Resolute Determination, you will attain Self-Awakening.¹² Hence, determination sustains motivation to attain our goals. Secondly, effort (*vīriya*) is considered the accomplishment of our goal. The *Anuruddha Sutta* (AN 8:30) states, “This Dhamma is for one whose persistence is aroused, not for one who is lazy.”¹³ It is through effort that we can pursue both short-term and long-term goals. In the same discourse, the effort is defined as “one keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful mental qualities and taking on skillful mental qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties about skillful mental qualities.”¹⁴ Effort is essential for inspiring us towards accomplishing our goals. Effort is also included in one of ten perfections from the Theravāda perspective, while one of the six perfections in the Mahāyāna tradition. Therefore, we cannot imagine any attainment and success without effort. Thirdly, patience (*khanti*) is essential to maintain long-term inspiration and motivation. The *Maṅgala Sutta* states “having patience is a blessing in our lives;¹⁵ through patience, we can cultivate wholesome qualities and contribute to suitable activities in society”. The *Dhammapada* states that enduring patience is the highest austerity in attaining higher spirituality.¹⁶ Long-term motivation and patience could help generate present happiness and future spiritual achievement. When we are impatient, we are not easily motivated towards our goals. The Buddha observed that the *Paṭhamākkhanti Sutta* (AN 5. 215) mentions that impatience makes one harsh and prey to regret.¹⁷ Because through impatience, we will give up easily virtuous works in society and the cultivation of a higher mind. Therefore, patience is a quality that inspires us and others to accomplish goals. Lastly, gratitude (*kataññū*) is a quality to maintain self-motivation. *Kataññūta* means to know what others have done for us. The Buddhist text defines gratitude: “Those who know and appreciate others’ help and services, it is also called *kataññū*.” If we want to show our gratitude to others, we should be motivated to do good work and act as a societal role model. According to AN, gratitude is a unique quality that a virtuous person should be endowed with: “Truly, good people are thankful.”¹⁸ It is recognized as a rare quality in Buddhist texts. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* states, “These two types of people are hard to find in the

¹¹ Walshe, *Long Discourses*, (1995): 492.

¹² Horner, *Chronicle of Buddhas*, (1975): 22.

¹³ Bodhi, *Numerical Discourses*, (2012): 1160.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 1164.

¹⁵ *Khp*, 2.

¹⁶ Buddhārakkhita, *Dhammapada*, (2016): 73.

¹⁷ Bodhi, *Numerical Discourses*, (2012): 825.

¹⁸ Bodhi, *Numerical Discourses*, (2012): 177.

world. One who will do a favor first and one who is grateful for a favor done.”¹⁹ It further explains, “One could not repay gratitude to parents by supporting with requisites, taking care during illness, and acquiring abundant wealth.”²⁰ By being grateful, one becomes a resilient human being.”²¹ It is by providing emotional support through penetrating Buddhist goals. Therefore, it is essential to have gratitude to motivate oneself and become an inspiration for others in society. The above-discussed shows the Buddhist concept of motivation. From Buddhist psychology, desire is the driving force of inspiration for pursuing our short-term or long-term goals. Besides, it revealed the factors driving appropriate behaviors towards pursuing our dreams. According to Buddhism, the four terms, determination, effort, patience, and gratitude, are essential to maintain motivation. If we cultivate the four qualities, we can maintain the motivation to overcome every obstacle in our lives. These will help maintain long-term motivation for achieving present happiness by attaining our short-term goal and liberation through transforming our personalities. In this way, we can keep our motivation high and motivate others.

IV. SELF-MOTIVATION USING DHARMA THERAPY-1

4.1. Case narrative

Due to confidentiality, the name of the case study is not disclosed. The subject is a 35-year-old man who feels demotivated to engage in good deeds and pursue spiritual practices. He is particularly addicted to social media, which consumes most of his time. As a result, he cannot devote himself to productive activities. Because of this, he underestimates the tasks assigned to him, thinking he can complete them within the given time. However, he consistently fails and procrastinates in finalizing his work. He has been experiencing this situation for four years (as of 2021) and has been unable to concentrate entirely on his studies. As a habitual pattern, his interests frequently shift from one subject to another, leading to delays in his assigned tasks. Although he is enthusiastic about learning various subjects and skills, his enthusiasm fades quickly. Consequently, he often feels helpless in completing his tasks by the deadlines. He experiences itchiness and discomfort on his face and limbs due to the stress and pressure of meeting deadlines, which makes him mentally and physically uneasy. As a Buddhist and a student of Buddhist studies, he enjoys writing about Buddhism on social media. However, due to stress and tension, he cannot continue his writing. Similar to a bad habit, he avoids helping others or discussing his studies. As a result, he becomes discouraged, unable to control his emotional stress, and fails to accomplish his assigned and intended work. Consequently, he feels unproductive and ineffective in society, as he believes he cannot contribute meaningfully to others.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁰ Bodhi, 2012, 153.

²¹ Padmasiri, *Emotions and Humour*, (2018): 72.

4.2. Introduction to Dharma Therapy

Dharma Therapy is a therapeutic method based on applied Buddhism that uses mindfulness as an intervention. Venerable Hin Hung defines Dharma Therapy as a psycho-social intervention that incorporates mindfulness practice and other Buddhist cognitive training to help clients develop the right view and understanding of the stressful situation that they are dealing with.²² The elimination of suffering is paramount while conveying the original essence of Buddha's purpose of liberating suffering into universal applicability. Dharma Therapy applies the Dharma as its theoretical foundation, which puts mindfulness back in its original place.²³ Though the final goal of Buddhism is the attainment of *nibbāna*, Dharma Therapy is not trying to persuade clients to eliminate their ultimate bondage of life and death. At least the application of Dharma Therapy should bring the well-being of the clients here and now. In contrast, the Buddha emphasises the elimination of people's suffering. Nevertheless, his methods can still be an efficient model to help clients heal their problems and suffering in today's world.²⁴ As the Dharma Therapy has a practical nature, therefore, it applies the seven steps of Dharma Therapy for enhancing self-motivation towards short-term and long-term goals.

4.3. Introduction and preparation sessions

The first step of Dharma Therapy is to prepare the client to explore sustainable spiritual practices. Then, through better understanding, it can generate a desire to commit to the practices that lead to the end of suffering. This research project will present the researcher himself as a counsellor to the client, keeping to commitment, impartiality, and integrity with the practice of Dharma Therapy of the client. According to Buddhism, we are responsible for our sufferings and happiness. It will determine our destiny depending on our choices. The *Dhammapada* (*Dhp* 276) states, "you must strive; the Buddhas only point the way."²⁵ This indicates that we are responsible for our actions and emotions. To achieve happiness in our lives, we have to follow a righteous path, which can lead to peace and happiness in our present and future lives. It requires generating a desire to end demotivation by exploring the causes and conditions that contribute to suffering in the present situation. It is believed to inspire researchers and others through the correct application of Dharma Therapy. To increase motivation, the client will be applying mindfulness of breathing and compassion meditation. It can be brought down all negative distractions by generating a positive attitude of mind. A positive attitude will help a person find purpose in life.

²² Hin and Wa, *Dharma Therapy*, (2021): 305.

²³ Sik. *Dharma Therapy*, (2005): 354.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 359.

²⁵ Buddharakkhita, *Dhammapada*, (2016): 107.

4.4. Awareness of suffering and unsatisfactory conditions of the current situation

Without being aware of current unsatisfactory conditions, a suffering person would have difficulty motivating himself/ herself to find a solution. Suffering is part and parcel of human existence, which can be categorized into various forms. Therefore, it is essential to understand the meaning of suffering and its causes and cessation. The *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* describes eight kinds of suffering as follows: Birth, ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, despair, association with the unbeloved, separation from the loved, and not getting what one wants are suffering. In short, the five clinging aggregates are sufferings.²⁶ The client's demotivation falls under the two kinds of suffering: not getting what he wants is suffering and the suffering of clinging to the five aggregates. The client wishes to get inspiration in doing his assigned work; however, sometimes, he cannot be motivated to finish his work on time. Eventually, he suffers from achieving short-term goals and long-term goals. If he cannot comprehend and be aware of his suffering, he may unconsciously inflict others by not doing good work. Theoretically, having identified the causes of his suffering, he would not inflict himself and others with demotivation. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the causes of his demotivation that contributed to his suffering through determination and mindfulness practices to inspire himself before inspiring others. The causes and conditions of his demotivation will become apparent from the *Sallatha Sutta* (SN 36. 6) Arrow Discourse. The Discourse analyses how ordinary people worsen their situation from the first arrow to the second arrow through various imagination and perception. For example, a person gets cancer pain, thus, he worries a lot. In this case, the first arrow refers to physical pains due to cancer, whereas the second arrow is mental suffering through worries and imagination. The first arrow is inevitable for both ordinary persons and noble persons; however, the second arrow can be avoided. The second arrow can be seen in this case study. The client intends to finish his assigned work and wishes to continuously be motivated for long-term goals, which could be either for his development or achievement. When he cannot fulfil his expected goals, he becomes depressed and tense. Thus, he suffers from the second arrow. Ordinary persons are more likely to suffer from the second arrow; however, noble persons are free from infliction since they do not have unrealistic imaginations.²⁷ From personal experience, he feels remorseful when he cannot finish his work on time. Before he completes his assigned task, he starts another new task. He wishes he could finish the later work to get the motivation to make his habit of completing the assigned work, whether it is for short-term or long-term goals. However, he feels less safe

²⁶ Walshe, *Long Discourses*, (1995): 344.

²⁷ According to the Discourse of Arrow, when the instructed noble disciple is contacted by a painful feeling, he does not sorrow, grieve, or lament; he does not weep beating his breast and become distraught. Bodhi, *Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, (2000): 1264.

and uncomfortable finishing his second task despite being interested in the second task rather than the previous one. He usually completes the priority work at the last minute, but he cannot perform well. As a result, he becomes tired and stays late at night with no sound sleep during heavy work. He feels relief when he can contact his friends during procrastination on the assigned work. By maintaining his self-motivation, he could execute assigned tasks in advance. Therefore, he will gradually lessen his suffering from awaiting deadlines by enhancing self-motivation to pursue personal goals.

4.5. A desire to attain liberation from suffering

In the third step of Dharma Therapy, he makes an effort to think and contemplate the causes and conditions of demotivation. Moreover, how demotivation hinders personal improvement in achieving his goals. Following guidance, he tried to understand and comprehend external and internal causes and conditions of demotivation. By contemplating the causes of suffering, he could understand that all the sleepless nights and prolonged stay at night do not need to continue, and the frustrations are worth being abandoned. The internal conditions of his suffering are wandering thoughts, aimless Internet surfing, and extended social media browsing. Due to their restless mind, he wonders and wishes to pursue different subjects simultaneously. To become knowledgeable and appreciative of society, he tries to learn many subjects to help others and share his knowledge. However, he needs to realize that he has limitations and cannot focus on many subjects concurrently. Though he intended to finish his work on time, he could not do so because he lacked determination. Those kinds of emotional sufferings arise due to the subjective perspectives, attitudes, and values.²⁸ Even though there is nothing wrong with being interested in many subjects, he should understand his study limitations. The external conditions contribute to emotional suffering, like restlessness and frustration. The client usually shares ideas, healthy emotional tips, and information on Buddhism on social media. When he browses to share on social media, he keeps browsing Facebook, one post after another. This makes him restless and distracted from focusing on his studies and assigned tasks. Sometimes, it even keeps him browsing social media during meditation time. When he wants to get motivated to pursue or study a subject, he needs to have a calm and composed mind. The composed and well-concentrated mind inspires him to continue towards his goal. Knowing the causes and conditions for demotivation, he could stop being and vice versa according to dependent arising. Therefore, by aspiring to change the causal conditions that give rise to the suffering, he could change by enhancing his motivation towards pursuing his goals. Without such aspiration, he would not be able to inspire himself. Knowing the uncontrollable situation, when the client contemplates, he should be compassionate to himself that irregular and random inspiration will be ready to accept it. Since an ordinary person like him is prone to be distracted by contacting various sense objects in daily life, he should be patient and

²⁸ Hung S. H., Wa J. Y. S, (2021): 307.

content with the steady motivation to pursue his goals. He will easily accept it once he understands that motivating himself towards my goal is beyond his control. Therefore, there will always be an imperfection in an imperfect world, and we should not expect everything to be perfect.²⁹

4.6. Questioning and investigating the cause of suffering

Due to his past *kamma*, he could not master it and be goal-oriented in this very life. When he considers this way, he is not motivated to reduce the causal conditions that give rise to suffering. However, it can be seen in the *Moliyasivaka Sutta* that we cannot only attribute our existential sufferings. The Sutta states eight conditions for suffering: phlegm disorders, wind disorders, imbalance of the three, change of climate, careless behavior, assault, and *karma*.³⁰ Through his understanding of this discourse, he could enhance his motivation through proper approaches to help reduce suffering. Thus, he can get motivation by using Dharma Therapy, which is achievable in his life. With ignorance, craving, and conceit, we create more suffering through birth and death. Regularly, we keep feeding on our senses with respective sense objects. For example, we always want to see a pleasant, visible object with our eyes. However, soon, we lose interest in that object, and then we seek another one. This process is known as craving in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*; thus, this craving leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there.³¹ As if we could get satisfaction through incessant seeking after pleasure. We could not understand due to ignorance. Ignorance means not knowing the four noble truths and dependent arising. Because we do not understand the true reality, we conceive ourselves and attach external things without even owning our own body and mind. Thus, about five aggregates, we hold: “This is mine, this I am, this is my self.”³² The three phrases represent craving, conceit, and ignorance. According to the commentary of MN, “this is mind” is induced by craving, the notion “this I am” by conceit, and the notion “this is my self” by wrong views.³³ We hold the view by not understanding the causes and conditions of arising craving, conceit, and ignorance. When we realize the causes and conditions through the right understanding, we will comprehend the emptiness of the conditionally arising phenomena. In dealing with suffering, it is necessary to identify the symptoms of suffering, its causes, and conditions caused by a lack of motivation. Now, it investigates the causes and conditions of demotivation by analyzing five aggregates. (1) *Form aggregate*: The physical symptoms arise due to demotivation, such as tension and itching on the face and hands, when the client regrets not doing his work systematically. Because of staying late at night with no sound sleep during heavy work, he suffers from headaches, which makes him tired. He also

²⁹ *Ibid.* 308.

³⁰ Bodhi (2012): 1278.

³¹ Bodhi (2000): 1844.

³² Bodhi (2009): 229.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1210.

experiences tense muscles due to overwhelming emotions of restlessness and agitation. (2) *Feeling aggregate*: It makes the client feel helpless in accomplishing the tasks assigned to each deadline. Consequently, he feels discouraged as he cannot control his emotional stress. He becomes emotionally disheartened when a restless mind overwhelms him, causing him to fail to complete his assigned work on time. He regrets that he has been unable to maintain the motivation to continue consistently toward long-term goals. (3) *Perception aggregate*: The client tends to learn many skills to become compassionate and productive in society. Being a monk, he believes that knowing many areas can help laypeople. He regards life with the motivation to become grateful, compassionate, and beneficial for society. Moreover, he wants to become a role model not for the sake of fame and gain but to convince them with an ethical and constructive attitude. As a monk, he should help laypeople, but due to internal conflict and dilemma, he could not help the lay society. (4) *Formation aggregates*: By understanding suffering as a result of demotivation, the client could be motivated to do good work and transformation of personality. To contribute to society, it is required to influence them through Buddhist ethical practices. It can also help him change and modify his undesirable behavior into acceptable behavior. By observing monastic rules, he will have fewer obstacles, which will help him to maintain motivation to achieve goals. With the right view, he wishes to apply the right mindfulness by enhancing motivation. If he is motivated by possessing the right understanding, mindfulness, determination, gratitude, patience, and effort, he will subdue both physical and emotional suffering. Through personal transformation and commitment goals, the client can comprehend the fabrications of craving, conceit, and ignorance that bring suffering. (5) *Consciousness aggregate*: The client sees himself as a demotivated person due to restlessness and distraction. It makes him regard himself as not compassionate and ungrateful due to a lack of motivation to do the personal transformation. It will make him vulnerable to maintaining motivation due to stress, tension, and agitation. He is not working hard since he is prone to agitation, restlessness, and daily distractions. It makes him fed up with a life that suffers more due to demotivation. He always wants to become motivated in personal transformation and commit to exemplary work. The impact of demotivation for the past four years is realized with less worthwhile and future-oriented. He should try to deepen his understanding consciously to reduce unconscious and automated wave responses. He is a person who is demotivated and does not work hard regularly; as a result, it makes him feel regretful. In short, Dharma Therapy is cultivating spirituality to ease human suffering in our daily lives. Through Dharma Therapy, the client begins his spiritual journey by understanding the issues of motivation and mindfulness to end suffering. Furthermore, comprehending the fabrications of craving, conceit, and ignorance that bring suffering will help him deepen his transformation and commit to his goals.

V. SELF-MOTIVATION USING DHARMA THERAPY-2

This part will discuss the method of understanding the relationship

between mind and suffering. It further examines the causes and conditions of mature knowledge and wisdom.

5.1. Observe and learn by paying careful attention to develop an understanding of the relationship between the mind and suffering

To motivate oneself, one must understand the right conditions to make it easier to inspire oneself. Knowing the proper conditions for reducing suffering could motivate him. If he is not motivated always to do good work, he should be content by accepting his capacity. Having such contentment could cultivate a positive attitude of mind with the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is the key to understanding the teachings of the Buddha. The word *sati*, mindfulness, has the characteristic of the awareness of the object that appears in the mind. Venerable Bodhi defines mindfulness as a stance of observation or watchfulness towards one's own experience.³⁴ Observing clearly whatever experience arises in our mind indicates mindfulness. By having a clear conception of the right understanding, mindfulness practice will become applicable to resolving the issue of motivation. At every moment, our mind grasps from one sense object to another object. If we are not mindful, anger, hate, and delusion will arise in our minds. In contrast, when we are mindful of our experiences, we will take them objectively without any subjective reactions of like and dislike towards the objects. Reading an inspiring book could bring our minds up during demotivation time. Enhancing motivation also relies on the attitude of our mind. When we are motivated, we can pursue our work diligently. While practicing Dharma Therapy, he regularly reads motivational books. One book that enhances his motivation is *Attitude Is Everything* by Jeff Keller. When he reads this book, it helps him to see things and situations positively. When they can see things around them positively, it makes them happy and concentrated. Therefore, such a positive attitude enhances motivation to complete the assigned task on time. This helps him focus on priorities according to his passion and interest in benefiting others. Besides that, a group meditation after chanting in the monastery is also initiated. Regularly, mindfulness of breathing is practiced. While guiding group meditation, meditation is also practiced. It is more convenient to practice mindfulness of breathing, which helps relax muscle tension, stress, distraction, and restlessness, leading to demotivation to pursue goals continuously. Here, it is essential to undertake the intervention based on the analysis of five aggregates. The client should take note to become aware of unpleasant sensations in the body and limbs. The sensation in the limbs will keep changing over time. It has to be noted that the thoughts that arise when they are overcome by demotivation, without making a conscious response, and reducing automated wave responses. This helps to reduce suffering through the cultivation of insight and wisdom. Moreover, when distraction, restlessness, and agitation become higher, motivation is reduced to a greater extent. Thus, it focused less on intended subjects when more distraction, restlessness, and agitation arise in the mind. Consequently, it is prone to cause

³⁴Bodhi (2011): 98.

more suffering. This multiplies suffering and reduces motivation to accomplish his goal. Therefore, focusing on such mental states in his intended works and spiritual cultivation is hard.

5.2. Develop insight and wisdom to bring an end to suffering

Under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha attained full enlightenment by upgrading his knowledge and wisdom through dependent arising. He has experimented with the process of eradicating negative emotions by training our minds with morality, concentration, and wisdom. The Discourse of Wisdom in AN 8.2 states eight causes and conditions that lead to obtaining, maturing, and increasing wisdom:³⁵ (1) Lives under teachers or noble friends, a person depends on the Teacher or on a certain fellow monk in the position of a teacher, toward whom he has set up a keen sense of moral shame and dread, affection, and reverence.³⁶ Hence, it is realized that when we have an excellent company, we can discuss personal development and oriented goals to benefit ourselves and others. This helps us stay strong and motivated to commit to our assigned work. (2) Discussion on various doubtful points, by having a good friend, we could discuss various points on Dhamma. We can investigate the meanings of different terms. Then, we can disclose what has not been disclosed, clear up what is obscure, and dispel perplexity about numerous perplexing points.³⁷ When it is read, some discourses in the *Nikāya* create confusion. Through discussion with friends, the hidden meanings could. (3) Withdraw physically and mentally, we seek our well-being by associating with a companion. A suitable option for getting rid of all trouble is withdrawing ourselves physically and mentally from society. Particularly, “if one does not find a judicious companion, a fellow wanderer, of good behavior, resolute, like a king who has abandoned a conquered realm, one should live alone like a rhinoceros horn.”³⁸ However, withdrawing our mind from all distractions is more important than physical withdrawal. By secluding ourselves, we can focus on cultivating our minds. (4) Endowed with morality, morality is the first step in the cultivation of all spiritual practices. A person endowed with morality and possessed of good conduct and resort sees danger in the slightest faults.³⁹ By following rules and regulations, our minds can become composed and peaceful. It is realized that when knowingly or unknowingly transgressing some rules, it makes them not happy and makes them sad. Thus, by observing rules, he can be motivated to commit to his goals without giving up. (5) Comprehensive understanding of Dhamma, we need to remember and comprehend to deepen our understanding of Dhamma. A person who has learned much remembers what he has learned and accumulates what he has learned much of, retained in mind, recited verbally, mentally investigated, and penetrated well by

³⁵ Bodhi (2012): 1112 - 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Bodhi (2017): 163.

³⁹ Bodhi (2012): 1112 - 4.

the view.⁴⁰ Once we have a theoretical understanding of Dhamma, we can investigate further through practical approaches. Thus, applying whatever doctrine we have studied well from *Nikāya* becomes easier. (6) Energetic, the role of effort is the mother of good luck. Without making an effort, we cannot succeed in our life. Similarly, to obtain wisdom, according to the Discourse of Wisdom, one has to arouse energy for abandoning unwholesome qualities and acquiring wholesome qualities; he is strong, firm in exertion, not casting off the duty of cultivating wholesome qualities.⁴¹ Therefore, effort is crucial in achieving anything in our lives. (7) Speaks only Dhamma, we become what we think. Whatever we speak is the product of the mind. Therefore, having meaningful discussions or keeping silent when we do not have something to say is essential. Either a person himself speaks on the Dhamma, or he requests someone else to do so, or he adopts noble silence.⁴² Sometimes, it is better to observe noble silence to maintain peace and a composed mind than just talking meaningless. (8) Observe five aggregates of clinging, it requires profound cultivation of mindfulness practice to analyze the five aggregates of clinging. To penetrate mind and body, a person dwells contemplating arising and vanishing in the five aggregates subject to clinging: "Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away."⁴³ It seems our sadness is permanent when we are in a bad mood. If we are mindful, we can distinguish the changing nature of our bad moods from time to time. When we can analyze the five aggregates, we can understand the dependent nature of our mind and body. The client wishes to always be motivated by committing to assigned work, but cannot update his understanding of continuous motivation and demotivation. By maintaining my inspiration, I try to understand and accept both motivation and demotivation as they are. If he does not have proper conditions of motivation arising, he accepts it as it is. Based on a positive attitude and a negative attitude of mind, it becomes appropriate conditions to raise motivation and demotivation. It is not natural that he will always be motivated to commit to his goal. When he can adjust his understanding, he will not let the suffering of the second dart trouble him through imagination and beliefs of unrealistic situations.

5.3. Develop wisdom to end suffering

The causes of motivation and demotivation should be comprehensible in the final stage of Dharma Therapy. The causes and conditions of his demotivation are due to being addicted to changing from unfinished work to another one. This habit has persisted for years. A habit is formed through repetitive practices in our daily lives. Likewise, he has become addicted to switching from unfinished work to a new task. Sometimes, he realizes why he becomes so quickly - it is due to developing such habits in his daily decision-making. Any skill initiated out of necessity, without considering personal

⁴⁰ Bodhi (2012): 1112 - 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

passion, demotivates him from continuing with assigned plans. This kind of habit affects him both physically and emotionally. For a healthy life, the client has to let go of such hesitant decisions. It is impossible to become an expert in all areas as there are uncountable subjects in the ocean of knowledge; instead, it should focus on areas relevant to passion and capability. This will help him to emphasize narrow areas by realizing and comprehending them through deep contemplation. It requires profound wisdom to understand the mind and matter. As ordinary persons, we accept pleasant objects while rejecting unpleasant objects. When we see pleasant objects, greed arises in our minds. However, when we see undesirable objects, hatred arises in our minds. According to the Discourse of Burning, "the mind is burning... and whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition - whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant - that too is burning. Burning with the fire of lust, hatred, and delusion."⁴⁴ By deepening our understanding of the process of mind and body, we could comprehend better how conceit coated with ignorance and greed with deep-seated roots of ignorance bring all types of suffering. To establish peace and happiness in my monastic life, he has to create personal goals by applying the noble eightfold path. Once he can generate a clear understanding of the motivation for cultivating wholesome qualities and performing specific skills, he can transform his personality and also be able to contribute to society. He needs to practice mindfulness regularly to strengthen the right understanding and enhance personal motivation. He realized when the right understanding and mindfulness are applied in his daily life, his thinking patterns are directed towards the right thoughts of non-violence, renunciation, and harmlessness. By possessing the right thought, he can act and speak rightly without harming himself and others. The ultimate purpose of enhancing his motivation is to cultivate wholesome qualities in his life. Other beneficial acts will be supportive of his spiritual cultivation. Once he has positive thoughts, he is ready to initiate and get motivated in his life. He is confident of improving his motivation by following the noble eightfold path. By enhancing his motivation, he will maintain his well-being and that of others. Hence, he can establish peace and motivation within himself and others. Mindfulness practice is the key to bringing a positive attitude into his life, which will help him to focus on his goals. Creating appropriate conditions will be helpful to subdue negative emotions with a positive attitude of mind. With a positive attitude, he will be motivated to pursue goals and be inspired to cultivate personal goals and welfare deeds, leading to personality transformation.

VI. CONCLUSION

This case study has explored the concept of motivation in Buddhist literature. This writing is based on a personal case study concerning the issue of motivation. According to the case study, one of the reasons for demotivation is habitual distraction caused by focusing on multiple subjects. However, from

⁴⁴ Bodhi (2000): 1143.

personal experience and research, it has been learned that reading motivational books helps maintain focus on goals. Moreover, associating with noble friends generates positive energy, which supports commitment to both short-term and long-term goals. Thus, motivation is a gradual process that continuously inspires one to work towards a goal.

Through the application of Dharma Therapy, an attempt has been made to enhance motivation. It has been affirmed that this method helps the client develop 50 percent motivation. The inability to fully adhere to the practice was due to overwhelming distractions and restlessness. He has taken on multiple religious and social responsibilities within the community. The situation was not favorable, as it required him to frequently relocate. He feels overwhelmed by distractions, has developed a negative attitude, and remains occupied with numerous responsibilities. The client would have benefited more if he had followed 100 percent of the Dharma Therapy methods. Motivation assists him in engaging in wholesome activities and remaining committed to his intended goals. To sustain motivation, he should limit the scope of his studies, making it easier to stay focused. In practice, this experience will continue to inspire and motivate him toward spiritual cultivation and the development of essential skills for both personal growth and the benefit of others. Although motivation issues have not been entirely resolved, he will continue to follow the guidance of Dharma Therapy for spiritual cultivation. This partial resolution of demotivation will enable him to progress further in life. The Buddhist perspective on motivation is an emerging area of academic study that warrants further exploration. This capstone experience project suggests delving deeper into the concept of motivation by studying and researching *Nikāya* and *Āgama* literature.

List of Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
Khp	<i>Khuddakapāṭhha</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
SN	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>

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COMPARING THE TWO HEALING TRADITIONS: BUDDHISM AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

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Abstract:

This study explores the intersection of Buddhist mindfulness and bioethics, examining how traditional Buddhist ethical principles contribute to contemporary ethical discourse in medicine, biotechnology, and environmental sustainability. By analyzing classical Buddhist texts alongside modern bioethical debates, the research investigates how mindfulness-based approaches offer unique ethical insights into pressing dilemmas such as end-of-life care, genetic engineering, and ecological responsibility. The study highlights the role of compassion, non-harming (ahimsa), and interdependence in ethical decision-making, emphasizing their relevance in medical ethics, patient care, and environmental conservation. Furthermore, the research integrates Buddhist ethical perspectives with contemporary bioethical theories, such as principlism and virtue ethics, to propose a holistic framework for addressing moral challenges in science and healthcare. The findings suggest that Buddhist mindfulness, when applied to bioethical considerations, fosters greater ethical awareness, empathy, and responsibility. By cultivating mindfulness, practitioners and policymakers can develop more compassionate and sustainable approaches to ethical dilemmas in biomedicine and ecological preservation. Ultimately, this study underscores the potential of Buddhist ethical teachings to enhance moral reasoning and guide ethical decision-making in an increasingly complex and technologically advanced world.

Keywords: *Buddhism, healing traditions, psychotherapy.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cultivating inner peace for world peace aligns closely with exploring Buddhist mindfulness and its integration with psychotherapy. Both share a common goal: alleviating suffering and fostering well-being, which underscores the importance of inner transformation as a means to impact broader societal change. World peace is not an abstract concept but the collective result of individuals cultivating peace within themselves. Buddhist mindfulness, emphasizing ethical conduct, mental development, and compassionate action, provides tools for this transformation.¹ By integrating these principles into psychotherapy and broader societal practices, we enhance not only individual mental health but also mental clarity and emotional stability, which lay the foundation for a more peaceful world.

1.1. Buddhist mindfulness

Buddhist mindfulness is now one of the West's most enduring and widespread psychotherapeutic methods.² Buddhist mindfulness is not merely a psychotherapeutic method but a profound pathway for cultivating inner peace. The central attraction of Buddhism for psychotherapy is its thoroughness in the analytical approach of mind, pathways to mental health, theoretical foundation, and methods of transformation.³ With the integration of Buddhism and psychotherapy, Buddhist psychology and philosophy are often overlooked and misunderstood by Westerners. Buddhist psychology and meditation are frequently thought of as religious practices based on the retreat from the outer world, and silent meditation is a manner of learning deep relaxation with transcendental connotations. The cultural misconception of Westerners considers Buddhism a culture-bound group of esoteric religions that do not offer much to people of different faiths.⁴ By investigating greater cultural and conceptual sensitivity between Buddhism and psychotherapy, we could open the possibility of mutual enrichment for both. Based on these reasons, this article will compare and discuss the divergences and convergences of Buddhism and psychotherapy in psychological problems, the meaning of mental health, the roots of suffering, the notion of self, cognitive development, confrontation strategies, and ethical integrity concerning the Four Noble Truths.

¹ Walsh, R., Shapiro S.L (2006), 'The meeting of meditative disciplines and Western psychology: a mutually enriching dialogue', *The American Psychologist*, vol. 61, no. 3, p. 227 - 239.

² Germer C.K (2005), 'Mindfulness: What is it? What does it matter?', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 12; Watson, G. (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: Routledge Curzon.

³ Goleman, D. (2004), 'Increasing use of Buddhist Practices in Psychotherapy', *American Scientist*, vol. 92, no. 1. p. 243.

Watson, G. (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: Routledge Curzon, p. 86.

⁴ Michalon, M. (2001), 'Selflessness in the service of the ego: contributions, limitations and dangers of Buddhist psychology for western psychotherapy', *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. 55, no. 2, p. 202 - 218.

1.2. Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is defined as the utilization of resources, wisdom, and guidance from professionally trained psychologists who, based on the systematic manner, scientifically comprehensible, empirically supported theories of illness, healing and treatment to their patients within a well-defined therapeutic relationship. The goals of psychotherapy are to eliminate psychological symptoms, reduce distress originating from patients' current problems, improve patients' coping abilities and their functioning in their social role in daily life, and facilitate patients to contribute to society.⁵ The therapeutic relationship forms the foundation of this process, providing a safe and supportive environment where patients can explore their difficulties and work toward resolution. By addressing the root causes of mental and emotional suffering, psychotherapy empowers individuals to lead more balanced and peaceful lives. When individuals attain inner peace, their relationships, interactions, and contributions to their communities are positively influenced.

II. FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Sakyamuni Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths in His first sermon after enlightenment, forming the foundation of Buddhist philosophy and practice. In the *Saccavibhanga Sutta* (MN 141),⁶ the Four Noble Truths are suffering, the origin of suffering, cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering.⁷ According to the Buddhist tradition, ordinary people will become spiritually-ennobled if they practice and gain deep insight into the Four Noble Truths.⁸

Western psychology employs a systematic framework for addressing psychological disorders, focusing on identifying symptoms, understanding their aetiology, providing a prognosis, and prescribing effective treatment.⁹ Both Buddhism and Western psychology share a foundational concern for alleviating human suffering. The first sermon of the Buddha states that 'suffering

⁵ Schnyder, U. (2009), 'Future perspectives in psychotherapy', *Eur Arch Psychiatry Clin Neurosci*, 259 (Suppl 2): S123 - S128.

Paul R. Fulton (2005), 'Mindfulness as clinical training', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press.

Rachel Sing-Kiat Ting (2012), 'The worldviews of healing traditions in the East and West: implications for Psychology of Religion', *Springer Science & Business Media*, no. 61, p. 759 - 782.

⁶ "Saccavibhanga Sutta: Discourse on The Analysis of the Truths" (MN 141), trans. Piyadassi Thera, Access to Insight, 30 November 2013, viewed 11 October 2024, <https://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.141.piya.html>.

⁷ "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting rolling the wheel of truth" (SN 56.11), trans. Nanamoli, Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 13 June 2010, viewed 13 December 2024, <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.nymo.html>.

⁸ Peter Harvey (2013), *An introduction to Buddhism*. Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd. p. 51.

⁹ Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), 'Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 29.

has to be understood, its origination has to be abandoned, its cessation has to be realised, and the practical path to this realisation has to be developed.¹⁰ These actions may also be a model for psychotherapy - to become aware, to abandon harmful patterns, to realise the possibility of greater freedom, and to cultivate the means to achieve it.¹¹

2.1. First Noble Truth - Suffering

The First Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*), as articulated in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11), identifies the multifaceted nature of human suffering. It encompasses physical and emotional challenges such as birth, aging, sickness, and death, as well as mental and relational struggles like sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair, association with the loathed, dissociation from the loved, and the frustration of unmet desires. In short, suffering is summarised as clinging to the five aggregates of grasping—form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.¹² These aggregates form a comprehensive model of human identity, representing the construction of self as an interplay of physical, emotional, and conceptual components.¹³ Buddhist teachings encourage individuals to view themselves not as static entities but as dynamic processes shaped by interdependent factors. The five aggregates illustrate how the sense of self arises from conditioned phenomena, which are transient and ultimately unsatisfactory. Through mindfulness and moral integrity, individuals can cultivate volition that leads to ethically skillful karma, fostering a deeper understanding of the three universal characteristics: suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anatta*). Recognising these truths allows individuals to see beyond their immediate attachments and aversions, paving the way for liberation from deeply ingrained notions of self.¹⁴

On the other hand, the particular American context defines suffering as a fundamental crisis of connection, characterized by a loss of rootedness, belonging, community, and continuity of care.¹⁵ Within psychoanalysis, the emphasis shifts from the reduction of pathology to the potentiation of a well-

¹⁰ Analayo (2006), *Satipatthana the direct path to realisation*. Penang: Inward Path Publisher. p. 245.

¹¹ Watson, G. (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: Routledge Curzon, p. 89.

¹² “*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting rolling the wheel of truth*” (SN 56.11), trans. Nānamoli, Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 13 June 2010, viewed 13 December 2024, <http://www.accesstinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.nymo.html>. Para 4.

¹³ Watson, G. (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 69, 244.

¹⁴ Peter Harvey (2013), *An introduction to Buddhism*. Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd. p. 56 – 57.
Rupert Gethin (1998), *The foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 142.

¹⁵ Janet L. Surrey (2005), ‘Relational psychotherapy, relational mindfulness’, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 96.

lived life, emphasising fulfilment and meaningful engagement with life.¹⁶ In Western psychological traditions, healthy development has historically been defined as becoming well-individuated—self-reliant, aware of personal needs, and appropriately respectful of boundaries. This development is often linked to a clear and stable sense of identity marked by cohesion and self-esteem. While contemporary relational theorists have critiqued this model for its emphasis on individuality over connection, it remains a foundational concept in psychodynamic and behavioural therapies. Psychotherapy, in this context, aims to restore individuals to fuller participation in cultural norms of selfhood, helping them achieve a sense of autonomy and self-respect while navigating their social roles and relationships.¹⁷

It is important to recognize that the first truth presents suffering as an impersonal phenomenon. Unlike Western tendencies to label, objectify, or personalise suffering as “my suffering,” the Buddhist perspective encourages individuals to accept suffering as a universal aspect of existence. This acceptance involves negotiating a relationship with suffering, recognizing it without grasping, reacting, or assigning it a diagnostic label.¹⁸ The core of healing practice is to recognize, investigate, understand, know, and accept the suffering of the symptom, distress, feeling, thought, or sensation and just let it be the way it is. By bringing mindful attention to distressing thoughts, feelings, or sensations, individuals learn to accept these experiences without resistance or judgment. This practice of “letting it be” promotes a sense of inner peace, as it reduces the emotional reactivity and mental clinging that often exacerbate suffering. Through this process, individuals can cultivate a more compassionate and balanced relationship with their inner experiences, laying the groundwork for personal healing and resilience. Such an approach fosters a profound shift in perspective, encouraging individuals to view suffering not as a personal failing but as an opportunity for insight and transformation.

The first of the Four Noble Truths acknowledges the reality of suffering, urging individuals to confront and understand it. This process mirrors the initial step in psychotherapy, where patients are encouraged to recognize and articulate their distress. By acknowledging suffering as an inherent aspect of life, individuals can begin the journey toward healing. This understanding serves as the foundation for cultivating inner peace, as it empowers individuals to address the root causes of their discomfort rather than merely alleviating symptoms.

¹⁶ Safran, J.D (2003), *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism: an unfolding dialogue*. Boston: Wisdom Publications. p. 135.

¹⁷ Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), ‘Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground’, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 39.

¹⁸ Janet L. Surrey (2005), ‘Relational psychotherapy, relational mindfulness’, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 99. Watson, G. (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: Routledge-Curzon. p. 69.

This view reflects the individualistic ethos prevalent in Western societies, where personal identity and independence are often emphasized over interdependence and communal bonds. This broader understanding of well-being highlights the importance of addressing individual psychological symptoms as well as the relational and existential dimensions of human suffering. Moreover, the integration of Western psychological traditions with Buddhist teachings offers a holistic approach to healing. While Western psychotherapy often focuses on restoring functionality and autonomy, Buddhist practices emphasize the impermanence and interconnected nature of existence.¹⁹ Together, these perspectives encourage a more comprehensive understanding of suffering and its resolution, bridging cultural and philosophical divides in the pursuit of inner peace and global harmony.

2.2. Second Noble Truth - Causes of suffering

The Second Noble Truth, as expounded in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11), identifies the origin of suffering as craving. Specifically, it refers to the craving for sensual desires, the craving for being (existence), and the craving for nonbeing (annihilation).²⁰ This craving arises from three root causes—greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*)—which manifest in emotions, thoughts, and actions, perpetuating cycles of suffering.²¹ These three roots of suffering can be seen as deeply ingrained psychological tendencies. Greed reflects an insatiable desire for pleasure, material possessions, or power, while hatred manifests as aversion, hostility, and aggression. Delusion encompasses ignorance and misunderstanding of the nature of reality, particularly the impermanent and interconnected nature of existence. Together, these forces distort perception and fuel reactive behaviors, creating disconnection and disharmony. Recognizing the causes of suffering enables individuals to abandon harmful patterns, paving the way for personal growth and resilience.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory offers an intriguing parallel to the Buddhist understanding of these root causes. Freud identified two fundamental drives: the erotic drive, which parallels greed, and the aggressive drive, which aligns with hatred. While Freud considered these drives as immutable aspects of human nature, Buddhist psychology views them as conditions that can be transformed through awareness and practice.²²

¹⁹ Siegel, S.R (2005), 'Psychophysiological disorder: embracing pain', *Mindfulness and psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press, p. 114.

²⁰ "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting rolling the wheel of truth" (SN 56.11), trans. Nanamoli, Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 13 June 2010, viewed 13 December 2024, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.nymo.html>. para 5.

²¹ Rupert Gethin (1998), *The foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 74.

²² Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), 'Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 43.

From a relational perspective, the root causes of greed, hatred, and delusion can be understood as habitual psychological or behavioral patterns that disrupt connection. Greed may lead to an inability to tolerate interruptions or imperfections in relationships, manifesting as possessiveness or excessive demands. Hatred often translates into attempts to control others, maintain a narcissistic image, or react defensively in conflicts. Delusion contributes to withdrawal or excessive independence, as individuals deny their vulnerabilities or yearnings for connection, leading to disconnection and isolation (Surrey, 2005: 100)²³. These patterns perpetuate cycles of suffering not only within individuals but also in their relationships and communities.

At the individual level, transforming greed into generosity, hatred into compassion, and delusion into wisdom fosters inner harmony. This transformation requires the cultivation of mindfulness, ethical conduct, and insight into the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things. By recognizing the transient and interdependent nature of desires and aversions, individuals can break free from reactive patterns and develop a more balanced and peaceful mind. At the relational level, understanding how greed, hatred, and delusion manifest in interactions can promote healthier and more compassionate connections. For instance, addressing greed might involve practicing gratitude and letting go of possessiveness, while countering hatred might require cultivating empathy and forgiveness. Overcoming delusion calls for honest self-reflection and a willingness to embrace vulnerability and interconnectedness. These efforts not only enhance personal relationships but also contribute to a culture of understanding and mutual respect. At a broader societal level, the roots of suffering are often reflected in systemic issues such as materialism, social inequality, and divisive ideologies. Addressing these challenges requires collective action grounded in the principles of generosity, compassion, and wisdom. Policies and practices that promote equity, inclusion, and sustainability can help to counteract the greed, hatred, and delusion embedded in social structures, paving the way for a more harmonious world.

Buddhist psychology offers a profound framework for understanding the mind and its interrelated processes. It is deeply concerned with analyzing the functioning of the mind and examining the dynamic interplay of causes and effects that shape personality. This understanding extends not only to an individual's current life but also across the continuum of multiple lifetimes, reflecting the concept of karma and the ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (*samsara*).²⁴ Central to this approach is the doctrine of dependent origination (*paticca samuppada*), which asserts that all phenomena arise and cease in dependence upon specific conditions. This teaching highlights the interconnected and interdependent nature of existence, shifting the focus

²³ Janet L. Surrey (2005), 'Relational psychotherapy, relational mindfulness', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press, p. 234.

²⁴. Peter Harvey (2013), *An introduction to Buddhism*. Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd. p. 67.

from static entities to the processes and relationships that define reality.²⁵ The doctrine of dependent origination challenges the conventional notion of a fixed, independent self, revealing instead a constantly changing web of causes and conditions. By recognizing the interdependent nature of all beings, individuals are encouraged to move beyond self-centred perspectives, fostering compassion, empathy, and understanding.

A key tool in Buddhist psychology for understanding and transforming the mind is mindfulness (*sati*). Mindfulness functions as a restraining force for the senses, allowing individuals to maintain a state of bare awareness. This awareness acts as a protective mechanism, preventing the formation of misconceived, biased, or distorted perceptions when processing sensory data. In the absence of mindfulness, the mind often becomes clouded by subjective interpretations, habitual reactions, and unconscious biases, leading to distorted cognitions and reactive behaviors. Through mindfulness, individuals can observe their experiences with clarity and equanimity, creating space for more skillful and compassionate responses.

The essential task of meditation in Buddhist practice is to dispel the unconscious cravings of the self and ignorance. Cravings, whether for sensual pleasures, existence, or non-existence, are seen as the root causes of suffering, as explained in the Second Noble Truth. Ignorance, or the inability to see things as they truly are, perpetuates these cravings and reinforces the illusion of a separate, permanent self. Meditation helps practitioners cultivate insight into the nature of reality, enabling them to see through these delusions and develop a more liberated and harmonious state of mind. Individuals can also develop greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience.

Both psychodynamic and behavioral traditions in Western psychology converge on the idea that suffering arises from distortions in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.²⁶ These distortions may manifest in various forms, such as maladaptive thinking patterns, emotional dysregulation, or unhealthy behavioral responses. Western psychology assumes biological, psychological, and sociological factors are the etiology of psychological disorders. These include genetic predispositions, family origins, early childhood experiences, parent-child relationships, attachment patterns, unconscious dynamics, cognitive and emotional processes, social support systems, job opportunities, economic conditions, and environmental influences.²⁷

²⁵ Gay Watson (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 70 – 71.

²⁶ Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), 'Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 32.

²⁷ Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), 'Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 31 – 32.

Rachel Sing-Kiat Ting (2012), 'The worldviews of healing traditions in the East and West: implications for Psychology of Religion', *Springer Science & Business Media*, no. 61, p. 759 – 782.

The goal of psychotherapy is to guide individuals in exploring and understanding their sense of self. This involves recognizing that the self is not a fixed, unchanging entity but rather a dynamic and evolving process. By loosening or delinking the stages of this process, psychotherapy fosters disidentification—creating space, choice, and flexibility in how individuals respond to experiences and engage in relationships. Through this work, patients can gradually release the causes of suffering and develop healthier, more adaptive ways of living.²⁸

Mindfulness-trained relational therapists add another dimension to this process by paying close attention to strategies of disconnection, such as objectification and emotional distancing. These behaviors often arise as defensive responses to difficult moments in therapy, rooted in relational patterns developed over time. Therapists use mindfulness to identify and address these relational root causes, fostering deeper connections and emotional healing.²⁹

However, Western psychological traditions rarely address the deeper, latent root causes of suffering, such as greed, hatred, and delusion, as articulated in Buddhism. Instead, they focus primarily on present-life conditions and circumstances, such as relationships, work environments, and socioeconomic factors, without delving into the karmic or existential dimensions of suffering.³⁰ Western psychology's emphasis on understanding the complexities of biological, psychological, and sociological influences provides valuable tools for addressing the immediate causes of suffering. Techniques from cognitive-behavioral therapy, attachment theory, and relational dynamics can help individuals navigate challenges in their lives, improving mental health and social functioning. These approaches foster resilience, emotional regulation, and relational skills, which are essential for cultivating inner peace.

Bridging these perspectives, a more holistic approach emerges. Mindfulness-trained therapists who integrate Buddhist principles can help patients not only alleviate immediate suffering but also address its deeper roots. By helping individuals recognize and transform greed into generosity, hatred into compassion, and delusion into clarity, therapists can facilitate profound inner change. This transformation enables individuals to move beyond self-centered perspectives, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and shared humanity. When individuals free themselves from the reactive patterns of greed, hatred, and delusion, they contribute to a culture of compassion, understanding, and collaboration. Furthermore, psychotherapy's focus on relational dynamics aligns with the Buddhist emphasis on interconnectedness. Understanding and transforming strategies of disconnection in personal relationships fosters healthier connections and a sense of belonging. At the

²⁸ Gay Watson (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 244.

²⁹ Janet L. Surrey (2005), 'Relational psychotherapy, relational mindfulness', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 101.

³⁰ Fabrizio Didonna (2010), *Clinical Handbook of Mindfulness*. New York: Springer. p. 5.

societal level, addressing the root causes of suffering can inspire systemic changes that promote equity, justice, and sustainability. For example, policies that reduce economic inequality, enhance social support systems, and address environmental challenges, where mindfulness, ethical conduct, generosity, compassion, and wisdom play central roles.

To truly integrate the strengths of Western psychology and Buddhist teachings, greater attention must be given to the latent causes of suffering identified in Buddhist psychology. Therapists and practitioners can benefit from exploring how greed, hatred, and delusion manifest in modern contexts - whether in consumerism, divisive ideologies, or systemic injustice - and work toward uprooting these tendencies. Similarly, individuals can embrace practices that cultivate mindfulness, ethical integrity, and compassion, fostering inner peace and contributing to a shared vision of world peace.

2.3. Third Noble Truth – Cessation of suffering

The third Noble Truth is the cessation of the suffering, *nirvāna*. *Nirvāna* represents the ultimate liberation - a blissful and transcendent state beyond all conditioned phenomena and the cyclical nature of rebirth.³¹ Nirvana is a profound transformation of consciousness that leads to perfect wisdom and compassion and is completely free from suffering.³² According to Buddhist diagnosis, the experience of the self as a substantial and isolated entity is the deepest psychopathological affliction, and the modification of that experience is the cure.³³

In early Buddhist philosophy, *Abhidharma* systematically analyses that the self can be deconstructed into various constituent elements that emerge from interdependence with each other by fluctuating causes and conditions.³⁴ The notion of self is born of delusion, ignorance, craving, and attachment to the five aggregates.³⁵ Recognising the illusory nature of the self and releasing attachment to these aggregates dissolve the karmic actions that perpetuate the cycle of rebirth.³⁶ Meditation is the primary tool for cultivating this

³¹ Peter Harvey (2013), *An introduction to Buddhism*. Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd. p. 60.

³² Rubin, J.B (1996), *Psychotherapy and Buddhism: toward an integration*. New York and London: Plenum Press. p. 84.

Alan B. Wallace (2007), *Contemplative science: where Buddhism and neuroscience converge*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 58.

³³ Engler, J. (1986), 'Therapeutic aims in psychotherapy and meditation: developmental stages in the representation of self', *Transformations of consciousness: conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*, ed. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Daniel P. Brown, Mardi Jon Horowitz. Boston: Shambhala. p. 23-4.

Safran, J.D (2003), *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism: an unfolding dialogue*. Boston: Wisdom Publications. p. 12.

³⁴ Safran, J.D (2003), *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism: an unfolding dialogue*. Boston: Wisdom Publications. p. 15.

³⁵ form, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness

³⁶ Rupert Gethin (1998), *The foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 146.

transformative insight. Through meditative practices, individuals develop the ability to observe their experiences without attachment or aversion. By recognising the impermanent and interdependent nature of the five aggregates, one learns to let go of self-centred craving and illusion. This process gradually dismantles the delusion of a fixed self, leading to the realisation of the non-self and, ultimately, enlightenment.³⁷ Importantly, the Buddhist conception of non-self does not advocate escapism or the elimination of functional ego roles. Instead, it emphasises a profound awareness of interdependence, fostering deeper connections with others and wiser engagement with the world.³⁸

The concept of the “insubstantiality of the self”, a core tenet of Buddhist philosophy, challenges deeply entrenched Western notions of individuality and identity.³⁹ From the viewpoint of Western psychoanalysis, the self is perceived as an enduring entity, while the perceived loss of self is the deepest psychopathological issue and may lead to nihilism or a reactive grasping of self.⁴⁰ In psychotherapies, mental health is defined as an absence of psychiatric pathologies, and well-being is achieved by reinforcing ego.⁴¹ To succeed in interpersonal relationships, work, and life, a strong ego is needed in impulse control, self-esteem, and competence in worldly functioning.⁴² Clinical syndromes such as infantile autism, symbiotic and functional psychoses, and borderline conditions are inability or failures to feel a cohesive or integrated self.⁴³ For instance, a deflated or inflated sense of self in affective and narcissistic disorders, a disrupted and impaired sense of selfhood in Traumatic Stress

Jinpa, G.T (2000), ‘The foundations of a Buddhist psychology of awakening’, *The psychology of awakening*. Maine: Samuel Weiser. p. 11.

³⁷ Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), ‘Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground’, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 41.

Safran, J.D (2003), *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism: an unfolding dialogue*. Boston: Wisdom Publications. p. 15.

³⁸ Alan B. Wallace (2007), *Contemplative science: where Buddhism and neuroscience converge*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 150.

Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), ‘Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground’, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 41.

³⁹ Fabrizio Didonna (2010), *Clinical Handbook of Mindfulness*. New York: Springer. p. 7.

⁴⁰ Jack Engler (1986), ‘Therapeutic aims in psychotherapy and meditation: developmental stages in the representation of self’, *Transformations of consciousness: conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*, ed. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Daniel P. Brown, Mardi Jon Horowitz. Boston: Shambhala. p. 23.

⁴¹ Stephen Batchelor, Guy Claxton (1999), *The psychology of awakening: Buddhism, science, and our day-to-day lives*. Maine: Samuel Weiser. p. 219.

⁴² John Welwood (2000), *Toward a psychology of awakening: Buddhism, psychotherapy, and the path of personal and spiritual transformation*. Boston, Shambhala. p. 35.

⁴³ Jack Engler (1986), ‘Therapeutic aims in psychotherapy and meditation: developmental stages in the representation of self’, *Transformations of consciousness: conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*, ed. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Daniel P. Brown, Mardi Jon Horowitz. Boston: Shambhala. p. 24.

Disorder (PTSD), and the development of integration in dissociative and borderline disorders.⁴⁴

The task of psychotherapy is to strengthen and stabilise the self, helping individuals achieve a sense of continuity and coherence across time, place, and states of consciousness.⁴⁵ Psychotherapists working with patients experiencing conditions like PTSD or borderline personality disorder may initially focus on helping individuals develop a cohesive sense of self. However, incorporating Buddhist practices of mindfulness and non-attachment can offer additional pathways for healing. For instance, patients can learn to recognize and let go of the reactive patterns that perpetuate their suffering, moving toward a more flexible and expansive sense of identity.

Mitchell distinguishes three views of the self in different schools of psychoanalysis: Freud interprets it as integrated and separate, the object relations and interpersonal interpret it as multiple and discontinuous, and the self psychology sees it as integral and continuous. There is also an increase in the dispersal of self, from intrapersonal and interpersonal to transpersonal dimensions over a wide area. According to various therapeutic models, there are contradictions in the definitions and descriptions of the development of self.⁴⁶ Despite these variations, Western psychology largely agrees that the self exists and that its reinforcement is the pathway to mental health.⁴⁷

The Buddhist perspective offers a profound critique of the excesses of individualism that are often emphasized in the psychoanalytic perspective.⁴⁸ Psychoanalysis traditionally emphasises active qualities such as investigating the mind, behaviours, and underlying unconscious dynamics, often overlooking broader relational, spiritual, and collective dimensions of existence. It strives to analyze, diagnose, and treat psychological disorders through intellectual and emotional exploration.⁴⁹ As Jack pointed out, this oversight in psychoanalysis is a limitation: “The mind’s power is limited, and the range of understanding that is available is rather small in scope.”⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Segal, S.R (2005), Mindfulness and self-development in psychotherapy, *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, vol. 37, no. 2, p. 143-163. p. 46.

⁴⁵ Max Michalon (2001), ‘Selflessness in the service of the ego: contributions, limitations and dangers of Buddhist psychology for western psychotherapy’, *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. 55, no. 2, p. 202-218. p. 208.

⁴⁶ Gay Watson (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 122.

⁴⁷ Rubin, J.B (1996), *Psychotherapy and Buddhism: toward an integration*. New York and London: Plenum Press. p. 64.

⁴⁸ Safran, J.D (2003), *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism: an unfolding dialogue*. Boston: Wisdom Publications. p. 31.

⁴⁹ Mark Epstein (2007), *Psychotherapy without the self: a Buddhist perspective*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 45.

⁵⁰ Jack Kornfield (1993), ‘The seven factors of enlightenment’, *Paths beyond ego: the transpersonal vision*, ed. Roger Walsh, Frances Vaughan. Los Angeles: Tarcher/Perigee. p. 58.

Jack highlighted the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and Buddhist meditation, noting that further progress in meditation requires a strong ego in the psychoanalytic sense.⁵¹ The ego is needed to integrate and synthesize experiences, which is essential for deeper spiritual practice. However, Buddhist practices seek to transform and transcend the ego, gradually moving beyond a rigid attachment to self-identity and uncovering the interconnectedness of all beings.⁵² Both psychologies agree that the self is a fluid and evolving process, a construction that emerges moment by moment from the interplay between internal and external factors.⁵³ The challenge is to develop an integrated and healthy sense of self while also understanding its impermanent and interdependent nature.

In contrast, Buddhism emphasises the cultivation of inner qualities such as concentration and equanimity to quiet the mind and stabilise emotions. Meditation helps practitioners reach a state of inner calm where they can witness their thoughts and emotions without attachment or aversion. This tranquil state enables clarity of thought and a deep understanding of the nature of suffering.⁵⁴ From the Buddhist perspective, the development of mindfulness is closely tied to the cultivation of equanimity. Equanimity, or mental balance, allows individuals to remain composed in the face of life's difficulties, preventing emotional upheavals from disrupting inner peace. This equanimity is not about suppressing emotions but about cultivating the capacity to observe and relate to them in a balanced way, without identification or attachment. By integrating mindfulness and equanimity into psychotherapy, individuals can learn to approach their suffering with acceptance and clarity rather than reacting impulsively or defensively.

Mindfulness meditation offers a powerful tool for both psychotherapists and their patients, fostering an environment where the ego can be trained to become more flexible, compassionate, and open to experience. According to Watson, mindfulness encourages individuals to develop friendliness toward themselves, reducing the distortions of emotional reactivity and expectations that often arise during psychotherapy.⁵⁵ By practicing mindfulness, patients can learn to observe their thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment,

⁵¹ Jack Engler (1998), 'Buddhist psychology, contribution to Western psychological theory', *The couch and the tree*, ed. Anthony Molino. New York: North Point Press. p. 17.

⁵² Epstein, M. (1995), *Thoughts without a thinker: psychotherapy from a Buddhist perspective*. New York: Basic Books. p. 85.

⁵³ Jack Engler (1986), 'Therapeutic aims in psychotherapy and meditation: developmental stages in the representation of self', *Transformations of consciousness: conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*, ed. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Daniel P. Brown, Mardi Jon Horowitz. Boston: Shambhala. p. 28.

⁵⁴ Rubin, J.B (1996), *Psychotherapy and Buddhism: toward an integration*. New York and London: Plenum Press. p. 156.

⁵⁵ Gay Watson (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 156.

cultivating a sense of openness and non-reactivity that enhances their emotional resilience. This practice empowers individuals to respond to life's challenges with clarity and composure, promoting mental health and emotional stability.

The apparent divergence between Western and Buddhist views of the self can be seen as complementary rather than contradictory. While Western psychology focuses on stabilizing the self to address pathological disruptions, Buddhist psychology aims to transcend the self to alleviate suffering at a deeper, existential level. Both Buddhist psychology and psychoanalytic theory emphasise the need for a balanced development of the ego and the self. While psychoanalysis focuses on strengthening the ego to create a coherent sense of self, Buddhist practice recognises the need to transcend the rigid attachment to the ego to experience true liberation. Jack pointed out that both perspectives view the ego as a process of synthesis and adaptation that helps individuals navigate the relationship between their inner world and outer reality.⁵⁶ This dynamic process of self-construction is essential for creating a sense of continuity and stability in one's existence. However, in Buddhism, the ultimate goal is to go beyond the self, recognising that the self is an illusion and that liberation arises when one transcends attachment to the ego.

To achieve this balance, both active and passive factors must be cultivated. Active factors, such as the intellectual investigation of the mind and its dynamics, are crucial for understanding the root causes of suffering. However, these active qualities must be tempered by passive factors, such as concentration and equanimity, which allow for deep introspection and self-awareness without the interference of ego-driven desires and attachments. By cultivating a quiet, concentrated mind, individuals can investigate their inner experiences with greater clarity and insight, leading to a deeper understanding of the nature of suffering and the path to liberation.

By emphasising the interconnectedness of all beings, Buddhist teachings challenge the ego-driven, self-centred behaviours that often lead to conflict and division. When individuals recognize that their happiness and well-being are deeply intertwined with the happiness and well-being of others, they are more likely to act with kindness, generosity, and understanding. Furthermore, as individuals let go of their attachment to the ego, they become more attuned to the collective needs of society, contributing to the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

In conclusion, the integration of both Buddhist and psychoanalytic perspectives offers a holistic approach to cultivating inner peace. By balancing the development of the ego and transcending attachment to it, individuals can achieve a state of mental and emotional stability that promotes well-being and compassion.

⁵⁶ Jack Engler (1986), 'Therapeutic aims in psychotherapy and meditation: developmental stages in the representation of self', *Transformations of consciousness: conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*, ed. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Daniel P. Brown, Mardi Jon Horowitz. Boston: Shambhala.

2.4. Fourth Noble Truth – The path leads to the cessation of suffering

According to the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11), the eightfold path is cultivated to cease suffering, which falls into three domains: wisdom, ethical conduct, and meditative concentration.⁵⁷ Buddhist ethics are the foundation of the spiritual path and are deeply embedded in the Buddhist worldview, including its assertions of rebirth⁵⁸ and *karma*.⁵⁹ From the *Anguttara Sutta*,⁶⁰ wholesome virtues and ethical conduct may avoid remorse or guilt, generate clear conscience, gladness, joy, and tranquillity, provide the firm foundation for developing meditative concentration, and then raise wisdom and insight into the Four Noble Truths - a key component on the path to attain nirvana.⁶¹

The first two factors of the Eightfold Path - right view and right intention - form the basis for wisdom. The right view involves understanding reality, especially the Four Noble Truths, and recognising all phenomena's impermanent and interconnected nature. This insight helps individuals free themselves from suffering by perceiving the world without distortion. The right intention entails cultivating compassion, kindness, and non-attachment, renouncing harmful desires, and fostering wholesome intentions that benefit individuals and society. Wisdom is not merely intellectual; it is transformative, providing profound insights into suffering and interconnectedness. With wisdom, individuals develop compassion and act in ways that reduce conflict and suffering.⁶²

The second domain - ethical conduct - encompasses right speech, right action, and right livelihood, which promote harmony and peaceful living. Right speech encourages truthfulness, kindness, and helpfulness while avoiding harmful words. Right action focuses on refraining from harm, such as killing, stealing, or misconduct. Right Livelihood advocates ethical work that avoids causing suffering. Ethical conduct fosters virtues like generosity and compassion, laying the groundwork for mental clarity and emotional stability. Guided by *karma*, ethical living addresses the roots of conflict and suffering,

⁵⁷ "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting rolling the wheel of truth" (SN 56.11), trans. Nanamoli, Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 13 June 2010, viewed 13 December 2024, <http://www.accesstinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.nymo.html>. para 7.

Rupert Gethin (1998), *The foundations of Buddhism*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 84.

⁵⁸ Rebirth: In Buddhism, no immortal entity passes from life to life, but each life must be considered the karmic effect of the previous life, and the cause of the following life.

⁵⁹ Peter Harvey (2000), *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 8. Karma: good and bad actions of body, speech, and mind whose pleasant and unpleasant results are experienced in this and subsequent lives.

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⁶¹ Peter Harvey (2013), *An introduction to Buddhism*. Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd. p. 40.

⁶² Morgan, W.D, Morgan, S.T (2005), 'Cultivating attention and empathy', *Mindfulness and psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press, p. 83.

supports meditative practices and wisdom, and generates positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

The third domain - meditative concentration - includes the right effort, mindfulness, and concentration. The right effort involves cultivating positive mental states and overcoming defilements like greed and hatred. Right mindfulness focuses on present-moment awareness without attachment or aversion, fostering clarity and peace. The right concentration develops single-pointed focus, enabling deep meditation and insight. Meditative practices help individuals observe thoughts and emotions without being overwhelmed. By letting go of harmful patterns, the mind becomes calm and clear, promoting understanding and compassion. This clarity fosters inner peace and encourages actions rooted in wisdom, reducing fear and suffering in the world.⁶³

Western psychotherapy, especially in its psychodynamic form, seeks to uncover and address the underlying causes of psychological distress. As Welwood notes, clinical practice and conceptual analysis help trace the causes and conditions that influence behaviour, mental states, and the overall structure of the self.⁶⁴ This approach uses introspection, self-reflection, and prescribed behavioural changes to address symptoms of psychological suffering. Psychodynamic psychotherapy, for instance, encourages patients to gain insight into their unconscious thoughts and feelings, particularly those shaped by early experiences, and to correct distortions in perception and self-identity. This process aims to heal psychic wounds, restore a more coherent self-image, and ultimately reduce the emotional suffering caused by unresolved conflicts and negative patterns.

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), another common approach, takes a more practical and structured method. It focuses on identifying and challenging irrational thoughts, helping patients replace these distorted beliefs with more rational, adaptive thoughts. The goal is to modify behaviour by changing the thought patterns that lead to maladaptive responses.⁶⁵ By restructuring negative thought patterns, CBT aims to reduce anxiety, depression, and other forms of psychological suffering. While both psychodynamic therapy and CBT are effective in promoting symptom relief and improving emotional well-being, they primarily focus on the outer layers of the psyche—on changing thought patterns, behaviours, and emotional responses.⁶⁶

⁶³ Nyanaponika (1996), *The heart of Buddhist meditation*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society. p. 2.

⁶⁴ John Welwood (2000), *Toward a psychology of awakening: Buddhism, psychotherapy, and the path of personal and spiritual transformation*. Boston, Shambhala. p. 4.

⁶⁵ Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), 'Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 34.

⁶⁶ Roger Walsh, Shauna L. Shapiro (2006), 'The meeting of meditative disciplines and Western psychology: a mutually enriching dialogue', *The American Psychologist*, vol. 61, no. 3, p. 227 - 239.

While these approaches can help alleviate suffering and bring about temporary relief, they are often less concerned with the deeper existential issues that cause chronic suffering. This is where Buddhist teachings offer a complementary perspective, one that delves into the root causes of suffering and provides a more holistic approach to inner peace.⁶⁷ In contrast to Western psychotherapy's focus on symptom relief, Buddhist teachings emphasise the importance of understanding and transforming the deep-rooted three causes of suffering. In Buddhist philosophy, suffering is not simply the result of external events or conditions but is rooted in the mind's tendency to grasp and cling to transient phenomena. This grasping is seen as the primary cause of suffering, perpetuating the samsara cycle.

Fulton points out that while psychotherapy can be beneficial in overcoming emotional suffering and enhancing self-esteem, it is not ultimately sufficient to liberate an individual from the deeper, existential suffering that arises from attachment, ignorance, and craving.⁶⁸ In the Buddhist tradition, liberation requires a profound shift in how one relates to the self and the world. This shift involves letting go of the illusion of a solid, independent self and recognising the interdependent nature of all beings. By cultivating inner peace through mindfulness, meditation, and ethical conduct, individuals can transcend the habitual patterns of grasping and craving that lead to suffering. As Wolfgang notes, meditation can serve as a way of "learning to control the archetypes within and to be free from them." This process is essential to the Buddhist path as it leads to a profound transformation of consciousness.⁶⁹

The journey toward inner peace is multifaceted, encompassing psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Western psychotherapy provides valuable tools for addressing the symptoms of suffering and helping individuals navigate the complexities of the human mind. However, to truly liberate oneself from suffering and contribute to world peace, it is essential to address the deeper causes of suffering - attachment, ignorance, and craving - through practices such as meditation, mindfulness, and ethical living. Individuals can cultivate inner peace if they integrate the wisdom of both Western psychotherapy and Buddhist teachings.

Humanistic, Existential theory, Heideggerian authenticity, and care have a much greater potential for exploring the place of moral reflection in self-understanding.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, in most settings, psychotherapy is only concerned with the ethics of therapist responsibility. Therapists take a

⁶⁷ Paul R. Fulton (2013), 'Contributions and Challenges to Clinical Practice from Buddhist', *Psychology Springer Science Business Media*, New York, vol. 42, p. 208 – 217.

⁶⁸ Paul R. Fulton (2013), 'Contributions and Challenges to Clinical Practice from Buddhist', *Psychology Springer Science Business Media*, New York, vol. 42, p. 208 – 217.

⁶⁹ Wolfgang Kretschmer (1962), 'Meditation techniques in psychotherapy', *Psychologia*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 75 - 83.

⁷⁰ Gay Watson (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 140.

nonjudgmental stance toward the client's ethical behaviour, whether it is ethically or socially acceptable, it is considered as a private matter. They only consider the criteria for acceptability, being whether it is conducive to the client's health.⁷¹ Conversely, psychoanalysis can enrich Buddhist understanding. Buddhism lacks a theory of the impact of individual psychological history on subsequent human development. Buddhism also neglects the vicissitudes of illusion and blindness operative in human relationships. This terrain is covered by the notion of transference and countertransference in the psychoanalytic situation, which can be systematically analysed and utilised to illuminate ways of being.⁷²

While Western psychotherapy focuses on symptom relief and self-exploration, it often neglects the importance of addressing the moral implications of human behaviour. This lack of moral reflection can limit the potential for true personal transformation. In Buddhist thought, the path to liberation involves both the cessation of suffering and the cultivation of a morally virtuous life, which includes recognising the ethical dimensions of one's actions. By integrating this ethical dimension into the therapeutic process, therapists can help clients not only understand their psychological issues but also reflect on the broader impact of their behaviour on others and the world around them.

This is where psychoanalysis can enrich Buddhist understanding. The psychoanalytic concepts of transference (the projection of past relationships and emotions onto the therapist) and countertransference (the therapist's emotional response to the client) offer a framework for exploring how unconscious patterns from the past affect present-day interactions. These patterns, which are often rooted in early attachment experiences and unresolved emotional conflicts, can significantly influence an individual's ability to connect with others and navigate relationships healthily. By analysing these dynamics in the therapeutic setting, psychoanalysis provides a way to understand and heal the deep-rooted psychological wounds that may be contributing to suffering.

From a Buddhist perspective, the practice of mindfulness and meditation encourages individuals to become aware of their mental and emotional patterns without becoming attached to them. However, the Buddhist approach does not always delve into the specific psychological history that shapes these patterns. This is where the psychoanalytic approach can be beneficial, as it offers tools for uncovering and understanding the unconscious forces that shape one's perceptions, relationships, and behaviors. By integrating psychoanalytic insights into Buddhist practice, individuals can gain a deeper understanding

⁷¹ Gay Watson (1998), *The resonance of emptiness: a Buddhist inspiration for contemporary psychotherapy*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon. p. 139.

Paul R. Fulton, Ronald D. Siegel (2005), 'Buddhist and Western Psychology: seeking common ground', *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*. London: Guilford Press. p. 34.

⁷² Rubin, J.B (1996), *Psychotherapy and Buddhism: toward an integration*. New York and London: Plenum Press. p. 168.

of the causes of their suffering and work to free themselves from the emotional patterns that keep them trapped in cycles of suffering.

Furthermore, the Buddhist path emphasises the importance of cultivating compassion, both for oneself and for others. Psychoanalysis, in its exploration of transference and countertransference, can help individuals develop a deeper understanding of their emotional responses to others and cultivate greater empathy and compassion in their relationships. By recognising how past experiences shape current emotional responses, individuals can begin to heal old wounds and develop more harmonious and compassionate relationships.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both Buddhist teachings and Western psychotherapeutic applications aim to alleviate suffering. The Four Noble Truths is the central theme of the Buddha's first sermon, which serves as a guide for those who wish to be liberated from suffering. Five aggregates have to be understood: ignorance and craving for existence have to be abandoned, knowledge and freedom have to be realised, and calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassana*) have to be developed. This model fertilises the content in highly diverse cultures of psychotherapeutic actions – to become aware, to abandon harmful patterns, to realise the possibility of greater freedom, and to cultivate the means to achieve it.

Buddhist and modern psychological approaches exist in divergence and convergence in the meaning of mental health, roots of suffering, the notion of self, strategies of confrontation, and ethical integrity due to differences in the belief system and historical development. Buddhist philosophy and meditation practices provide numerous tools for profound spiritual growth. Nonetheless, there are challenges and stimulation for the application of contemporary mindfulness in psychotherapy, whether it can still hold the heart of Buddhist teachings and be able to provide the functional interventions of sustaining well-being. Alternatively, psychotherapy provides a new avenue for the evolution and application of Buddhist practices to incorporate into Western life effectively. The cross-fertilisation and mutual support between Buddhism and psychotherapy form a new framework of understanding, and the potential of this encounter should be explored more in future research so that it can benefit and help people to liberate themselves from suffering.

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UNDERSTANDING NON-SELF: A PATHWAY TO TRUE INNER PEACE

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Abstract:

Non-self (*anattā*), a unique and essential doctrine in Buddhism, is very crucial for those who are keen to understand the true nature of life. The doctrine of non-self proves that the idea of an existing self is merely an illusion of one's mind. Perceiving the five aggregates of clinging (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*) as non-self (*anattā*) offers a practical approach to the ultimate happiness or true inner peace.

The teaching on non-self stands as a significant remedy to the issues of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) - the three afflictions that lead to mental distress. Understanding *anattā* through Insight meditation helps to untangle the delusion that fosters these afflictions. As a result, this process leads to liberation, which is the true state of inner peace.

Keywords: *Buddhism, mindfulness, meditation, ethics, compassion, philosophy, liberation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The exploration of the Buddhist concept of *anattā*, or non-self, provides profound insights into the true nature of all phenomena. Contemplation of non-self in conjunction with contemplation of impermanence and suffering can significantly remove the issues of craving, conceit, wrong view, and delusion, which are unwholesome qualities related to the notion of self. The craving, conceit, and wrong view, regarded as three kinds of grasping manifested through the idea of 'mine', 'I', and 'my-self' (*etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā*) in each individual. They distort our perception of reality and lead to the individual's suffering and strife.

The doctrine of non-self removes deeply ingrained perceptions of identity and individuality. By understanding the non-self-characteristic of existence,

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practitioners can break the illusions that sustain a sense of permanent selfhood or existing ego. He can gradually remove the craving, conceit, and wrong view that feed the illusion of self and pave the way to a clearer vision and harmonious existence. Importantly, through clear discernment through *anattā*, one can discern mind and matter, know how to develop and cultivate the mind through Insight meditation so that he can break the idea of one's identification with self, reduce suffering in life, and finally attain the states of true inner peace.

In this essay, there will be an exploration of essential points of non-self: an interpretation of the term *anattā* (non-self), an illustration of the unwholesome qualities related to the illusion of self, the role of Insight Meditation as a pathway leading to this profound understanding, and the benefits that arise from contemplating non-self in the pursuit of inner peace.

Through this framework, we can find a pathway to alleviating personal suffering through the understanding of the concept of non-self in the Theravāda tradition and the ultimate benefits of its contemplating in Insight meditation.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF NON-SELF (ANATTĀ)

The word non-self is derived from the Pāli term '*anattā*', which is formed by combining the negating particle *na* and the noun *attā*. In a general sense, it signifies the negation of the existence of *attā*. The doctrine of *anattā* emphasizes that there is no 'soul,' countering the prevalent belief in an eternal or temporary soul held by many religions during the Buddha's time. It rejects the assumption of a real entity, an eternal self, or even a transient self that exists for a lifetime or migrates from one life to another.¹ In the Pāli discourses, *anattā* is frequently explained through *anicca* and *dukkha*, the two other common characteristics. Although the term *anattā* can have multiple renderings and interpretations, 'non-self' is the equivalent term most commonly used by Buddhist scholars and is adopted in this paper.

The doctrine of *anattā* is presented in discourses through various classifications of realities, such as aggregates, bases, and elements. For example, in the *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta*, the notion of *attā* is connected to five aggregates. Ordinary individuals tend to regard the five aggregates to be 'mine,' 'I,' and 'myself' (*etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā*).² These three considerations are a manifestation of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), respectively.³ Furthermore, *attā* is often conceived as something permanent over which one can exert control. The *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta* says that the five aggregates are *anattā* because they are impermanent and beyond one's control. In this context, Upadhyaya observes that the self represents the most potent

¹ Psm-a. I. 132; Nguyen Quy Hoang. (2024). *Analysis the Doctrine of Not-self (anattā) by Therāvada* accessed on December 30 2024, available at:

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² S. II. 55

³ Srd-ṭ. III. 186

and subtle form of clinging, which is the root cause of suffering. Consequently, the greatest emphasis is placed on abandoning the conceit of the self.⁴ Although craving and clinging are closely tied to the belief of *attā*, the *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta* explains that this belief arises from the delusion of the true nature of the five aggregates.

According to *Pāli* texts, *attā* is a conceptual idea conceived by the mind regarding mind and matter, which may be classified in various ways, such as five aggregates of clinging (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*). Due to ignorance of their true nature, the mind tends to regard these soulless aggregates either as soul or related to the soul. The commentaries provide several reasons for the five aggregates being '*anattā*'.⁵ For example, *Visuddhimagga* offers four reasons: they are 'empty' (*suñña*), 'not having an owner' (*assāmika*), 'not subject to overlordship' (*avasavatti*), and 'rejection of *attā*' (*attāpaṭikkhepa*).⁶ Additionally, the *Sammohavinodanī* adds that they do not function according to their own will or wish (*akāmakāriya*).⁷

Although for Buddhists, *anattā* is a simple rejection of any substance or entity apart from the five aggregates, the doctrine of *anattā* is considered profoundly difficult to comprehend and explain. For instance, the *Sammohavinodanī* describes the characteristics of *anattā* as non-evident, obscure, unclear, impenetrable, difficult to illustrate, and difficult to describe.⁸ While it may not be very difficult to comprehend superficially, attaining personal insight into *anattā* requires the practice of insight meditation. That is why *anattā* is considered a unique and exclusive doctrine in Buddhism.⁹

In the *Pāli* texts and commentaries, *anattā* is often explained in relation to *anicca* and *dukkha*. For example, in the *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta*, the Buddha explains that the five aggregates are *anattā* because they are *anicca* and *dukkha*. Similarly, the *Yadanicca Sutta* presents a more straightforward explanation: "Whatever is impermanent is suffering; whatever is suffering is non-self".¹⁰ Similarly, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā* also highlights impermanence as one of the reasons the five aggregates are *anattā*.¹¹ As previously discussed,

⁴ Kashi Nath Upadhyaya (1998): 314.

⁵ S-ṭ. II. 203: "Avasavattānaṭṭhena assāmikaṭṭhena suññataṭṭhena attāpaṭikkhepaṭṭhenā;" Srd-ṭ. III. 169 Avasavattānaṭṭhena assāmikaṭṭhena suññataṭṭhena attāpaṭikkhepaṭṭhenāti evaṃ catūhi kāraṇehi anattā;" Avasavattānaṭṭhena pana anattā. Abh-a. II. 44: "Yasmā vā etaṃ uppannaṃ ṭhitim mā pāpuṇātu, ṭhānapattāṃ mā jiratu, jarappataṃ mā bhijjātūti imesu tīsu ṭhānesu kassaci vasavattibhāvo natthi, suññaṃ tena vasavattānākārena; tasmā suññato, assāmikato, akāmakāriyato, attāpaṭikkhepatoti imehi catūhi kāraṇehi anattā".

⁶ Vsm. II. 254

⁷ Abh-a. II. 44

⁸ Abh-a. II. 46: "Anattālakkaṇaṃ apākaṇaṃ andhakāraṃ avibhūtaṃ duppaṭivijjhaṃ duddīpanaṃ duppaññāpanaṃ."

⁹ Karunadasa, Y. (2015): 49-50.

¹⁰ S.II. 19: "Yadaniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ; yaṃ dukkhaṃ tadanattā."

¹¹ Psm-a. I. 132: "Attāsāraniccasāravirahitattā anattā."

dukkha is also sometimes explained through *anicca*; the five aggregates are *dukkha* because they are impermanent. This shows that *attā* is conceived as a permanent entity possessing the essence of happiness. Consequently, anything that is impermanent and suffering is *anattā*.

Importantly, *anattā* refers to the five aggregates, while the characteristic of *anattā* is merely the mode of no power exercised over the five aggregates. It denotes that *anattā* pertains to the realities of being with the characteristic or possessing the characteristic (*lakkhaṇavanta*).¹² In the context of Insight meditation, without understanding the characteristics of *anattā*, one cannot distinguish *anattā*. After one has clearly discerned the characteristics of *anattā*, one has to then focus primarily on the *anattā*. Thus, understanding the characteristic of *anattā* is the key to perceiving the *anattā*.

III. SOME UNWHOLESOME QUALITIES RELATED TO THE ILLUSION OF SELF (ATTĀ)

Ordinary individuals often perceive the five aggregates as belonging to themselves, identifying them with expressions such as ‘this is mine,’ ‘this I am, and ‘this is my self’ (*etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā*). These three considerations presented herein are indicative of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), respectively.¹³ Even *moha* (delusion) Pa Auk Sayadaw also asserts that these three types of grasping are always associated with *moha*.¹⁴

In the *Vibhaṅga*, *moha* is articulated as the absence of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, of the ultimate beginning of sentient beings, of the ultimate end of sentient beings, of both the ultimate beginning and the ultimate end of sentient beings, and specific causality and dependently originated states.¹⁵ The characteristic of *moha* is blindness or the opposite of knowledge. Its functions are non-penetrating and cover the intrinsic nature of all phenomena. It is manifested as the absence of a right view or blindness. The proximate cause for the arising of *moha* is unwise attention. *Moha* is the root of all unwholesome *dhammas*.¹⁶ Therefore, the Buddha preaches *moha* as a root cause of all unwholesome *dhammas*, giving an example of the rafters of a peaked house. All the rafters of a peaked house lead to the roof peak and converge upon the roof peak. When the roof peak is removed, all the rafters are removed. Similarly, all unwholesome states are rooted in *moha* and converge upon *moha*. When *moha* is uprooted, all unwholesome states are uprooted. Therefore, one should train oneself diligently to uproot them.¹⁷ *Moha* covers the true nature of realities, so

¹² Suffix ‘-vant’ is possessive suffix.

¹³ *Srd-t.* III. 186.

¹⁴ Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw (2009): 30.

¹⁵ Paṭhamakyaw Ashin Thitṭila (Setṭhila), trans. (1995): 471.

¹⁶ *Abh-a.* I. 291: “*Moho cittassa andhabhāvalakkhaṇo aññāṇalakkhaṇo vā, asampaṭivedharaso ārammaṇasabhāvacchādanaraso vā, asammāpaṭipattipaccupaṭṭhāno andhakārapaccupaṭṭhāno vā, ayonisomanasikārapadaṭṭhāno. Sabbākusalānaṃ mūlanti daṭṭhabbo.*”

¹⁷ *S. I.* 454: “*Ye keci akusalā dhammā sabbe te avijjāmūlakā avijjāsamosaṇā avijjāsamugg-*

the illusion of self has a chance to invade the mind; the craving, conceit, and wrong view have a chance to arise in one. That is why delusion is fundamental to all these unwholesome mental states.

Craving (*taṇhā*) is one of the unwholesome mental states, namely, greed (*lobha*). It arises not only when one desires to get something but also when one enjoys pleasant visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and mental objects. The *Sammohavinodanī* illustrates the characteristic of *taṇhā* as a cause (*hetu*) of unwholesome states. Craving is not easily extinguished because it has been accumulated for a long time and is deeply rooted in the ordinary person. That is why *taṇhā* is called canker (*āsava*), which is likened to a fermented intoxicant.

With the characteristic of haughtiness (*unnatilakkhaṇa*),¹⁸ *māna* is understood as the rising of the mind. *Māna* will take place any time the mind is compared with others or when one conceives oneself in relation to others as superior, equal, or inferior. Even though there is no comparison in the fundamental level of “this I am”, based on this idea of self, there arises a thought of comparing oneself to others. *Māna* arises in one when he considers himself central and when he compares himself with others. The *Itivuttaka* commentary states that *māna* appears in the mind dependent on one’s birth, lineage, and so on. When one starts to compare himself with others, the conceit reaches to gross level, with an imagination of ‘I am better’ (*seyyohamasmi*), and so on, or imagining oneself (*maññati*) or a patronage (*sampaggaho*).¹⁹ When the five aggregates are perceived as self, such a perception is also called the pride of self (*asmimāna*). From the Buddhist perspective, it is exceedingly challenging to eliminate this conceit. Only when *Arahatship* has been attained can conceit be eradicated. The eradication of conceit is only achievable upon the attainment of *Arahatship*. It is apparent that all ordinary individuals possess some degree of conceit; even the three lower *Ariya* persons still have conceit or still cling to *nāma* and *rūpa* with a sense of conceit.

In relation to the illusion of self or ego, there are multiform of wrong views such as wrong view of identity (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), wrong view of life (*jīva diṭṭhi*), becoming-view (*bhava diṭṭhi*), view of God’s creative activity (*issaranimmāna diṭṭhi*), wrong view of feeler (*vedaka diṭṭhi*), view of non-causality (*ahetu-appaccaya diṭṭhi*) and so forth. These wrong views obscure one’s capacity for wisdom, presenting significant barriers to a clear understanding of materiality and mentality in the ultimate reality. Due to this blindness, individuals are unable to perceive phenomena as they really are and fail to acknowledge the nature of *anattā*.

hātā, sabbe te samugghātāṃ gacchanti. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ - ‘appamattā viharissāmā’ ti;” Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. (2000): 901.

¹⁸ *Abh-a.* I. 298

¹⁹ *It-a.* 48: “Mānanti jātīadivattukāṃ cetaso unnamanaṃ. So hi “seyyohamasmi” tiādinā nayena maññanti tena, sayāṃ vā maññati, mānanaṃ sampaggahoti vā mānoti vuccati.”

In general, craving, conceit, and wrong views are referred to as three types of grasping (*gāha*), illusions (*maññanā*), or obsessions (*papañca*).²⁰ The combination of craving and incorrect view with delusion is termed the cankers (*āsavā*).²¹ In terms of association, these three types of grasping are always associated with *moha*. When there is a wrong view, there is always delusion and craving. However, wrong views and conceit never co-exist at the same time. Consequently, Pa Auk Sayadaw classifies these four into two distinct groups: (1) conceit, delusion, and craving, or (2) wrong view, delusion, and craving. These elements lead the uneducated, ordinary person to engage in both unwholesome and wholesome actions through the body, speech, and mind.²²

IV. COMPREHENDING NON-SELF THROUGH INSIGHT MEDITATION: A PATH TO REMOVING CRAVING, CONCEIT, AND WRONG VIEW FOR ACHIEVING TRUE INNER PEACE

The understanding of non-self by practicing Insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) can remove some unwholesome qualities of the mind, namely craving, conceit, and wrong view, by unveiling the illusion of self. In this approach, the mind and matter or five aggregates of clinging are systematically categorized into four distinct classifications that serve as objects of contemplation: namely, (1) contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), (2) contemplation of the feeling (*vedanānupassanā*), (3) contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā*), and (4) contemplation of the mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*).²³

Significantly, contemplation of the body is for the clear understanding of the aggregate of materiality (*kāyānupassanāya vā rūpakkkhandhapariggahova*), contemplation of the feeling is for the aggregate of feeling (*vedanānupassanāya edanākkhandhapariggahova*), contemplation of consciousness is for the aggregate of consciousness (*cittānupassanāya viññānakkhandhapariggahova*), and contemplation of the *dhamma* is for the aggregates of perception and mental formations (*idāni saññāsaṅkhārakkhandhapariggahampi*).²⁴ Importantly, contemplation of the body abandons the hallucination of perceiving beauty in the foul (*subha vipallāsa*). Contemplation of the feeling abandons the hallucination of perceiving pleasure in the painful (*sukha vipallāsa*). Contemplation of the perception and mental formations abandons the hallucination of perceiving self in the non-self (*attā vipallāsa*). And, contemplation of consciousness abandons the hallucination of perceiving permanence in the impermanent (*nicca vipallāsa*).²⁵ (Table 1)

²⁰ *Srd-ṭ. III*. 186. Mahā Thera Ledi Sayadaw. (2004): 4; Bhikkhu Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda (2012): 11.

²¹ *Abh-a. I*. 403

²² Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw (2009): 30.

²³ *M. I*. 70

²⁴ *M-a. I*. 286; U Hla Myint (2005): 182. “*Kāyānupassanāya vā rūpakkkhandhapariggahova kathito, vedanānupassanāya vedanākkhandhapariggahova, cittānupassanāya viññānakkhandhapariggahovāti idāni saññāsaṅkhārakkhandhapariggahampi kathetum*” “*kathaṇca, bhikkhave*” “*tiādimāha*.”

²⁵ *Abh-a. II*. 33; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli trans. (1996): 39; *Vsm. II*. 110: “*Visesato ca ajjhatti-*

Table 1. Four Foundations of Mindfulness and Their Abandonments about the Five Aggregates of Clinging

No.	Five Aggregates of Clinging (<i>Pañcuppādānakkhandhā</i>)	4 Foundations of Mindfulness	Abandonment
1	<i>Rūpakkhandha</i>	<i>Kāyānupassanā</i>	<i>Subha vipallāsa</i>
2	<i>Vedanākkhandha</i>	<i>Vedanānupassanā</i>	<i>Sukha vipallāsa</i>
3	<i>Saññākkhandha</i>	<i>Dhammānupassanā</i>	<i>Attā vipallāsa</i>
4	<i>Saṅkhārakkhandha</i>		
5	<i>Viññāṇakkhandha</i>	<i>Cittānupassanā</i>	<i>Nicca vipallāsa</i>

Undoubtedly, the practice of Insight meditation is necessary to eradicate mental defilements. In the Buddhist context, insight is the penetrative understanding attained through the direct meditative experience of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* in all existent mental and material phenomena. Here, in the *Visuddhimagga*, there are forty modes of contemplating (*cattālīsākāranupassanā*) each aggregate as *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*.²⁶ Among them, there are five modes, namely, (1) as alien (*paratā*), (2) as emptiness (*rittatā*), (3) as vain (*tucchatā*), (4) as void (*suññata*), and (5) as non-self (*anattāta*) classified under the characteristic of *anattā*.

At this point, each aggregate is contemplated as alien because of the nature of the inability to have mastery exercised over itself and other realities (*avasatāya*) and because of intractability (*avidheyyatāya*).²⁷ The commentator clarifies by giving an example. Just as a man who has his own decision does not need to follow according to another's wish, similarly, the five aggregates do not follow one's wish only pleasant feeling arises, one remains beautiful, and so on.²⁸ Then, it is contemplated as emptiness because of its emptiness of permanence, beauty, pleasure, and self (*dhuvasubhasukhattābhāva*).²⁹ It is

karūpaṃ asubhato passanto kabalīkārāhāraṃ parijānāti, asubhe subhanti vipallāsaṃ pajahati, kāmoghaṃ uttarati, kāmāyogena viṣaṃyujjati, kāmāsavena anāsavo hoti, abhijjhākāyaganthaṃ bhindati, kāmupādānaṃ na upādiyati. Vedanaṃ dukkhato passanto phassāhāraṃ parijānāti, dukkhe sukhaṃ vipallāsaṃ pajahati, bhavoghaṃ uttarati, bhavāyogena viṣaṃyujjati, bhavāsavena anāsavo hoti, byāpādakāyaganthaṃ bhindati, silabbatupādānaṃ na upādiyati. Saññaṃ saṅkhāre ca anattāto passanto manosañcetanāhāraṃ parijānāti, anattāni attāti vipallāsaṃ pajahati, diṭṭhoghaṃ uttarati, diṭṭhiyogena viṣaṃyujjati, diṭṭhāsavena anāsavo hoti, idaṃ saccābhinivesakāyaganthaṃ bhindati, attāvādupādānaṃ na upādiyati. Viññāṇaṃ anicca-to passanto viññāṇāhāraṃ parijānāti, anicce niccanti vipallāsaṃ pajahati.”

²⁶ Vsm. II. 247; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010): 637-638.

²⁷ Vsm-mṭ. II. 395, 248; Psm-a. II. 161: “Parato samanupassanatāyāti paccayāyattāttā avasatāya avidheyyatāya ca “nāhaṃ na mama”nti evaṃ anattāto samanupassanatāya.”

²⁸ Vsm-mṭ. II. 395: “Avasatāyāti avasavattānato. Yathā parosatanto puriso parassa vasaṃ na gacchati, evaṃ subhasukhādibhāvena vase vattetuṃ asakkuṇeyyato.”

²⁹ Vsm. II. 248: “Yathāparikappitehi dhuvasubhasukhattābhāvehi rittatāya rittato.”

contemplated as vain because it is empty (*ritta*) and trifling (*appaka*). And what is trivial is called ‘vain’ in the world (*appakampi hi loke tucchanti*).³⁰ It is contemplated as void because every aggregate is devoid of the state of being an owner (*sāmi*), abider (*nivāsi*), doer (*kāraka*), experiencer (*vedaka*), and manager (*dhiṭṭhāyaka*). And, it is contemplated as non-self because of having no owner and so on (*assāmikabhāvādi*).³¹ So, there are twenty-five kinds of contemplation of non-self (*anattānupassanā*) based on the five aggregates.³²

Another comprehension concerning *anattā* is the seven methods that can be summed up into two-fold as material septad (*rūpasattāka*) and the immaterial septad (*arūpasattāka*).³³ Moreover, contemplation of non-self is the third of the eighteen principle insights (*aṭṭhārasa mahāvipassanā*),³⁴ which are applied through the instruction of the Buddha in the *Anattālakkhaṇa Sutta* as follows:

Therefore, *bhikkhus*, any kind of form whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all form should be seen as it is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’³⁵

The same applies to the remaining four aggregates.

Herein, two points can be considered:

(1) Regarding three kinds of grasping, it is necessary to meditate on each aggregate existing in eleven aspects as “this is not mine”, “this I am not” and “this is not my self” through contemplation of *dukkha* (*dukkhānupassanā*), *anicca* (*aniccānupassanā*) and *anattā* (*anattānupassanā*). Here, when one discerns the five aggregates or *nāma-rūpa* as *dukkha* (*dukkhānupassanā*), the idea of *taṇhā* as “this is mine” is cut off because *taṇhā* can arise in the mind when one has the perception of happiness (*sukha*). Besides, by discerning *nāma-rūpa* as *anicca* (*aniccānupassanā*), the conceit (*māna*) as “this I am” is removed because the view of conceit as “I” arises only when one has the perception of *nicca*. Then, the perception of *attā* arises when one has the wrong view of *attā*, so the wrong view can be removed when one discerns *nāma-rūpa* as *anattā* (*anattānupassanā*).³⁶ (Table 2)

Table 2: Contemplation of Anicca, Dukkha, and Anattā and Their Removal about Three Kinds of Grasping

³⁰ Vsm. II. 249: “Rittatāyeva tucchato appakattā vā, appakampi hi loke tucchanti vuccati.”

³¹ Vsm. II. 248: “Sāmi-nivāsi-kāraka-vedakādhiṭṭhāyakovirahitatāya suññato. Sayañca assā-mikabhāvāditāya anattāto”

³² Vsm. II. 249

³³ Vsm. II. 262

³⁴ Vsm. II. 264

³⁵ S. II. 55; Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. (2000): 902.

³⁶ Vsm. II. 263-264: “...Evaṃ saṅkhāre anattāto passantassa diṭṭhisamugghāṇaṃ nāma hoti. Aniccato passantassa mānasamugghāṇaṃ nāma hoti. Dukkato passantassa nīkantipariyādānaṃ nāma hoti. Iti ayaṃ vipassanā attāno attāno ṭhāneyeva tiṭṭhatīti, Visuddhimagga.”

	Aniccānupassanā	Dukkhānupassanā	Anattānupassanā
Ditṭhi			✓
Māna	✓		
Taṇhā		✓	

The necessity of contemplating *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* can be known from the factors that are eliminated by the three types of contemplations. For example, *aniccānupassanā* ñāṇa (knowledge that contemplates *anicca*) requires the support of *dukkhānupassanā* ñāṇa (knowledge that contemplates *dukkha*) and *anattānupassanā* ñāṇa (knowledge that contemplates *anattā*) to effectively remove conceit (*māna*). Similarly, with the assistance of the other two, *dukkhānupassanā* ñāṇa can eliminate *taṇhā* (craving), and *anattānupassanā* can eradicate *ditṭhi* (wrong view).³⁷ Hence, commentaries emphasize that contemplating only one characteristic is insufficient for the eradication of the unwholesome states. Only when one kind of *anupassanā* ñāṇa is supported by the remaining two types will unwholesome states be removed.

(2) Besides, deconstructing the four kinds of compactness³⁸ is also a very important step for contemplating *anattā*. Concerning this method, Pa Auk Sayadaw asserts that if one is not able to deconstruct this compactness by insight, one will not gain insight into the ultimate reality (*paramattha ñāṇa*). The understanding of ultimate reality is a prerequisite for the realization of *anattā*. In the absence of this insight into *anattā*, individuals will be unable to achieve the ultimate states of development, including the Paths, Fruitions, and *Nibbāna*.³⁹ Interestingly, it is concerned with the eighth of the eighteen principal insights, which is the contemplation of destruction. By contemplation destruction, one can abandon the perception of compactness. Actually, among the eighteen principal insights, six principal insights are related to the characteristics of *anattā*.⁴⁰ They are:

- (1) The contemplation of non-self, which abandons the perception of self (*anattānupassanaṃ bhāvento attāsaññaṃ pajahati*),
- (2) The contemplation of relinquishment, which abandons grasping (*paṭinissaggānupassanaṃ bhāvento ādānaṃ pajahati*),
- (3) The contemplation of voidness, which abandons misinterpreting (*suññatānupassanaṃ bhāvento abhinivesaṃ pajahati*),
- (4) The correct knowledge and vision which abandons misinterpreting (*yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṃ bhāvento sammohābhinivesaṃ pajahati*),

³⁷ *Vsm-mṭ*. II.264, 415 - 416

³⁸ *Paramatthadīpanī*. 441. Four types of compactness: compactness of continuity (*santatighana*), of aggregation (*samūhaghana*), of function (*kiccaghana*), and of object (*ārammaṇaghana*).

³⁹ Pa Auk Sayadaw (2009): 92.

⁴⁰ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010): 655.

(5) The contemplation of reflection, which abandons non-reflection (*paṭisaṅkhānupassanaṃ bhāvento appaṭisaṅkhaṃ pajahati*), and

(6) The contemplation of turning away, which abandons misinterpreting due to bondage (*vivaṭṭānupassanaṃ bhāvento saṃyogābhinivesaṃ pajahati*).

Besides, seven principal insights are related to the characteristics of *anicca*.⁴¹ They are:

(1) The contemplation of impermanence, which abandons the perception of permanence (*aniccānupassanaṃ bhāvento niccasaññaṃ pajahati*),

(2) The contemplation of cessation, which abandons origination (*nirodhānupassanaṃ bhāvento samudayaṃ pajahati*),

(3) The contemplation of destruction abandons the perception of compactness (*khayānupassanaṃ bhāvento ghanasaññaṃ pajahati*),

(4) The contemplation of the fall of formation abandons the accumulation of *kamma* (*vayānupassanaṃ bhāvento āyūhanaṃ pajahati*),

(5) The contemplation of change abandons the perception of lastingness (*vipariṇāmānupassanaṃ bhāvento dhuvasaññaṃ pajahati*), and

(6) The contemplation of the signless abandons the sign (*animittānupassanaṃ bhāvento nimittaṃ pajahati*), and

(7) The insight into states that is higher understanding which abandons misinterpreting due to grasping at a core (*adhipaññādharmavipassanaṃ bhāvento sārādānābhinivesaṃ pajahati*).

Moreover, five principal insights related to the characteristics of *dukkha*.⁴² They are:

(1) The contemplation of pain that abandons the perception of pleasure (*dukkhānupassanaṃ bhāvento sukhasaññaṃ pajahati*),

(2) The contemplation of dispassion that abandons delighting (*nibbidānupassanaṃ bhāvento nandiṃ pajahati*),

(3) The contemplation of fading away that abandons greed (*virāgānupassanaṃ bhāvento rāgaṃ pajahati*),

(4) The contemplation of the desireless, which abandons desire (*appaṇihitānupassanaṃ bhāvento paṇidhiṃ pajahati*), and

(5) The contemplation of danger, which abandons misinterpreting due to reliance (*ādinavānupassanaṃ bhāvento ālayābhinivesaṃ pajahati*).⁴³

⁴¹ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010): 655.

⁴² Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010): 655.

⁴³ *Vsm. II. 265*; Bhikkhu Ñāṇadassana, *Wisdom and the 73 Kinds of Mundane and Supramundane Knowledge*, accessed on March 8, 2025, p. 73. Available at:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=r-ja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj5H_pNb2AhWyJaYKHSC_CqAQFnoECAIQAQ&url=htt

Table 22: Eighteen Principle Insights with Regard to the *Sāmañña Lakkhaṇa*

No.	<i>Aṭṭhārasa mahāvīpassanā</i>	<i>Pajahati</i>	Lakkhaṇa
1	Aniccānupassanā	Niccasaññā	<i>Anicca</i>
2	Dukkhānupassanā	Sukhasaññā	<i>Dukkha</i>
3	Anattānupassanā	Attāsaññā	<i>Anattā</i>
4	Nibbidānupassanā	Nandi	<i>Dukkha</i>
5	Virāgānupassanā	Rāga	<i>Dukkha</i>
6	Nirodhānupassanā	Samudaya	<i>Anicca</i>
7	<i>Paṭinissaggānupassanā</i>	Ādāna	<i>Anattā</i>
8	Khayānupassanā	Ghanasaññā	<i>Anicca</i>
9	<i>Vayānupassanā</i>	Āyūhana	<i>Anicca</i>
10	Vipariṇāmānupassanā	Dhuvasaññā	<i>Anicca</i>
11	Animittānupassanā	Nimitta	<i>Anicca</i>
12	Appaṇihitānupassanā	Paṇidhi	<i>Dukkha</i>
13	Suññatānupassanā	Abhinivesa	<i>Anattā</i>
14	Adhipaññādharmavīpassanā	Sārādānābhinivesa	<i>Anicca</i>
15	Yathābhūtañāṇadassana	Sammohābhinivesa	<i>Anattā</i>
16	Ādīnavānupassanā	Ālayābhinivesa	<i>Dukkha</i>
17	Paṭisaṅkhānupassanā	Appaṭisaṅkhā	<i>Anattā</i>
18	Vivaṭṭānupassanā	Samyogābhinivesa	<i>Anattā</i>

Herein, contemplation observed based on *anattā* is called contemplation of non-self (*anattānupassanā*), and one who does such contemplation is called *anattānupassī*.

V. ANATTĀ AND THE GATEWAYS TO LIBERATION (VIMOKKHAMUKHA) - THE TRUE INNER PEACE

The contemplation of *anattā* is considered one of the three gateways to liberation (*vimokkhamukha*). The *Visuddhimagga* illustrates three types of contemplation as the three gateways to liberation with the three points:

For it is the three contemplations that are called the three gateways to liberation, according as it is said: ‘but these three gateways to liberation lead to the outlet from the world, [that is to say,] (i) to the seeing of all formations as limited and circumscribed and to the entering of consciousness into the signless element, (ii) to the stirring up of the mind

concerning all formations and to the entering of consciousness into the desireless element, and (iii) to the seeing of all things (*dhamma*) as alien and to the entering of consciousness into the voidness element.⁴⁴

In this description, the commentator explains how contemplation of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* are respectively considered as gateways to liberation, doors to the liberation. In simple words, the names of the gateways to liberation are based on the way of contemplation. Those three points are understood thus:⁴⁵

- (1) The contemplation of impermanence, which discards the sign of perversion, becomes the gateway to liberation called the contemplation of the signless (*animittānupassanā*),
- (2) The contemplation of suffering, which discards desire through craving, becomes the gateway to liberation called the contemplation of the desireless (*appaṇihitānupassanā*), and
- (3) The contemplation of non-self, which discards the clinging to a self, becomes a gateway to liberation called the contemplation of the void (*suññatānupassanā*).

Concerning *anattā* with its correlation to the gateway to liberation, when one practices the contemplation of *anattā* (*anattānupassanā*), one contemplates formations in the form of the void of a self and realizes the concept of the void of a self. Therefore, the contemplation of *anattā* is termed for contemplation of the void (*suññatānupassanā*).

Moreover, the contemplation of *anicca* is settled upon in whom faith (*saddhā*) is the dominant faculty. The contemplation of *dukkha* is settled upon in whom concentration (*samādhi*) is the dominant faculty, and the contemplation of *anattā* is settled upon in whom wisdom (*paññā*) is the dominant faculty.⁴⁶ Therefore, in dependence on the predominance of the faculty of wisdom, the contemplation of *anattā* occurs.

Interestingly, the *Paṭisambhidhammagga* asserts that when one gives attention to formations as *anattā*, the formations appear to him as voidness. When one gives attention as *anattā*, his cognizance has great wisdom. When one who has great wisdom gives attention as *anattā*, he acquires the void liberation (*suññata vimokkha*).

Furthermore, when one who has great wisdom gives attention as *anattā*, the void liberation is dominant in him. In development, two liberations, which are *animittavimokkha* and *appaṇihitavimokkha*, follow upon it, are conascent conditions, mutuality conditions, support conditions, and association conditions, and have a single function (taste).⁴⁷ At the time of penetration, the void liberation is dominant in him. In penetration, those two liberations follow upon it, and so on.

⁴⁴ *Vsm.* II. 296; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010): 685.

⁴⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (1999): 356.

⁴⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (1999): 356-7.

⁴⁷ *Psm-a.* II. 165 " ... *dve vimokkhāti animittaappaṇihitavimokkhā.*"

Besides, when he gives attention as *anattā*, the void liberation is outstanding in him. With the void liberation outstanding, this person is called One Attained to Vision (*ditṭhippattā*).⁴⁸ In this way, when one reflects the five aggregates as *anattā*, he is liberated through the void liberation, or the contemplation of non-self (*anattānupassanā*) leads to the void liberation (*suññata vimokkha*).

Importantly, liberation is the name for the Paths and Fruits. The Paths get the name dependent on contemplation, which is called the gate to liberation. If the Insight leading to emergence is the contemplation of the signless, the Path is named signless liberation. If the insight leading to emergence is the contemplation of desireless, the Path is called desireless liberation. Similarly, if the insight leading to emergence is the contemplation of the void, the Path is termed void liberation. Likewise, the Fruit in the cognitive process of the Path (*magga vīthi*) receives these three names according to the way of the Path. However, when a noble one enters his respective Fruition attainment, the Fruition experience is named after the type of Insight that led immediately to its attainment, but not after the original Path attainment in the cognitive process of the Path, as asserted in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*:⁴⁹

... in the cognitive process of the attainment of fruition, to those who contemplate in the foregoing manner, the fruits that arise respectively in each case are termed the void emancipation, etc., only in accordance with the way of insight. But as regards objects and respective qualities, the three names are applied equally to all (paths and fruits) everywhere.⁵⁰

Therefore, by practicing the contemplation of *anattā*, if one attains liberation, his Paths and Fruitions or liberation is known as *suññatavimokkha*, and *anattānupassanā* is called the gateway to liberation (*suññatavimokkhamukha*) or a door to transcendent Paths and fruitions. That is the contemplation of *anattā* leading to void liberation, which refers to the four Paths and the four Fruits.

The Paths and Fruits are named *animittavimokkha*, *appaṇihitavimokkha*, or *suññatavimokkha* because of three reasons: of arrival or attainment (*āgamanato*) composing of insight arrival and Path arrival, of its virtue (*saguṇato*), and the object (*ārammaṇato*) as explained in the *Aṭṭhasālinī*:

It is also said that this Path as attainment gets the name of the Void or Empty, and is called the Signless and the Undesired because of its own merits and of the object. Therefore, occupying the goal of Path-arrival, it gives the three names to its fruition.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Psm. 254-257; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (1982): 258-261.

⁴⁹ Abhs. 66; Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (1999): 357-8.

⁵⁰ Abhs. 67: "Phalasamāpattivīthiyaṃ pana yathāvuttanayena vipassantānaṃ yathāsa-kaphalamuppajjamānampi vipassanāgamanavaseneva suññatādivimokkhoti ca pavuccati, ārammaṇavasena pana sarasavasena ca nāmatāyaṃ sabbattha sabbesampi samameva ca, Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha; Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (1999): 358.

⁵¹ Abh-a. I. 330; Pe Maung Tin trans. (1921): 381.

Here, *saguṇato* refers to the *suññata*, *animitta*, and *appaṇihita*. Āgamanato composes insight arrival and Path arrival, and the object (*ārammaṇato*) is *nibbāna*. The *Visuddhimagga* also mentions this point thus:

The signless liberation should be understood as the noble path that has occurred by making *nibbana* its object through the signless aspect. For the path is signless owing to the signless element having arisen, and it is a liberation owing to deliverance from defilements. In the same way, the path that has occurred by making *Nibbana* its object through the desireless aspect is desireless. And the path that has occurred by making *nibbana* its object through the void aspect is void.⁵²

This is how *nibbāna* is known as an object under different aspects in a specific manner. The *Animitta* Path knows *nibbāna* as sinlessness, which has no signs of being conditioned, beyond time and change, beyond arising and passing away. The *Appaṇihita* Path knows *nibbāna* as desireless, departing from craving known as an entanglement and beyond all desire leading to all suffering. And, the *suññata* Path knows *nibbāna* as voidness, the impossibility to cling to any kind of *attā*, I, mine, and my-self, etc.

Generally, the contemplation of *anattā* leads one to *suññatavimokkha* or *suñattā* Paths and Fruitions with *nibbāna* as its object. This is how contemplation of *anattā* is considered the gateway to liberation. It is an indispensable stage for the next, the attainment of realization through *anattā*.

Here, it is important to understand two kinds of realization, namely, mundane realization (*lokiya-sacchikiriya*) and supra-mundane realization (*lokuttara-sacchikiriya*). Interestingly, the realization is also classified into three kinds, namely, mundane realization, supra-mundane realization as seeing and supra-mundane realization as developing. When one realizes *nibbāna*, this realization is done as seeing and as developing. The seeing of *nibbāna* at the moment of the first lower Path is the realization of seeing. At the other three higher Path moments, it is the realization that is developing.⁵³

The final goal of the development of insight into *anattā* is the realization of *Nibbāna* (*nibbāna-sacchikiriya*). It is a state of enlightenment when one realizes the truths or void of any kinds of *attā*, void of defilements, ignorance, and cankers, etc. because *Nibbāna* is void of the cankers and defilements (*āsavakkhaya*) or the state attained by removing the conceit of I (*asmimānasamugghāta*), which is the ultimate purpose of the *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta*.⁵⁴

In the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, *nibbāna* is illustrated as supra-mundane (*lokuttara-saṅkhāta*) because it is realized by the knowledge of the four Paths. It becomes an object to the Paths and Fruits, and it is called *nibbāna* because it is a departure from craving, which is an entanglement.⁵⁵ Moreover, *nibbāna*

⁵² *Vsm.* II. 296; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans. (2010): 686.

⁵³ *Vsm.* II. 339

⁵⁴ *D-ṭ.* I. 271

⁵⁵ *Abhs.* 46; Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (1999): 258: “*Nibbānaṃ pana lokuttarasāṅkhātāṃ catumaggañāṇena sacchikātabbaṃ maggaphalānamārammaṇabhūtaṃ vānasāṅkhātāya*

is called the void (*suññata*) because it is devoid of greed, hatred, and delusion and because it is devoid of all that is conditioned. It is called signless (*animitta*) because it is free from the signs of greed, etc., and free from the signs of all conditioned things. It is called desireless (*appaṇihita*).⁵⁶ Again, *nibbāna* should be understood as void because of the absence of (1) any experiencer, (2) any doer, (3) anyone who is extinguished, and (4) any goer. This is said in the *Visuddhimagga*:

For there is suffering, but none who suffers;/Doing exists although there is no doer;/Extinction (*nibbāna*) is but no extinguished person;/ Although there is a path, there is no goer.⁵⁷

The practice of *vipassanā* meditation, particularly through the lens of understanding the five aggregates of clinging as *anattā* (non-self), facilitates the realization of the Path and Fruition knowledge. When one has fully attained the Path and Fruition knowledge through *vipassanā* meditation, he is recognized as a noble person (*ariya*).

There are four types of a noble person, namely, *Sotāpanna*, *Anāgāmi*, *Sakadāgāmi*, and *Arahanta*. In the final stage, as an *Arahanta*, one has eradicated all cankers and defilements. Regarding enlightened individuals, the *Mahāli Sutta* mentions four levels of enlightenment. The first stage of enlightenment is the Path consciousness of a Stream-entry (*Sotāpattimagga*). It eradicates the three fetters (*saṃyojana*): false view (*diṭṭhi*), skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), and adherence to rites and rituals (*śīlabbataparāmāsa*).⁵⁸

The second stage of enlightenment is the Path consciousness of once-returning (*sakadāgāmimagga*). At this stage, greed (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) are attenuated. The third stage of enlightenment is Path consciousness of non-returning (*anāgāmimagga*), which eradicates the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiya-saṃyojana*), sensual lust (*kāmarāga*), ill-will (*paṭigha*), adherence to rites and rituals (*śīlabbataparāmāsa*), false view (*diṭṭhi*), and skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*). *Anāgāmi* person takes a spontaneous rebirth in a higher sphere without returning from that world, he will attain higher enlightenment there. The final stage of enlightenment is the Path consciousness of arhantship. It totally abandons all cankers (*āsavakkhaya*). *Arahant* will not be reborn in any existence. He enters the state of the unconditional peace of *Nibbāna*.⁵⁹

Therefore, by developing *vipassanā* meditation by seeing the five aggregates of clinging as *anattā*, one attains the Path and Fruition knowledge. When one

taṇhāya nikkhantattā nibbānanti pavuccati, Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha."

⁵⁶ *Abhs.* 46; Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (1999): 260.

⁵⁷ *Vsm.* II. 145: "Suññatekaḍḍhādiḥitiettha suññato tāva paramatthena hi sabbāneva saccāni vedakakārakanibbutagamakābhāvato suññānīti veditabbāni. Tenetaṃ vuccati – "Dukkhameva hi, na koci dukkhito; Kārako na, kiriyāva vijjati. Atthi nibbuti, na nibbuto pumā; Maggamatthi, gamako na vijjati" ti, *Visuddhimagga*."

⁵⁸ *D-a.* I. 279

⁵⁹ *D. I.* 148; Maurice Walshe, trans. (2012): 145 - 146.

has fully attained the Path and Fruition knowledge through the practice of *vipassanā* meditation, all fetters are abandoned, and the underlying tendencies are exterminated. This understanding of *anattā* is fundamentally conducive to the realization of *nibbāna* (*nibbānasacchikiriya*), representing the ultimate inner peace for every individual.

VI. CONCLUSION

The essay has emphasized the profound concept of non-self (*anattā*) as a cornerstone for understanding the nature of existence and the cessation of suffering. Anatta has been clarified as uncontrolling possessing, no owner, emptiness and rejecting the self, having no core, not behaving as desired, alien and vain, etc. This paper also emphasizes some unwholesome mental qualities related to the illusion of self, such as delusion, craving, conceit, and wrong view. They are obstacles in contemplating the mind and matter as they really are. In insight meditation practice, understanding the characteristics of *anattā* is the key to perceiving the five aggregates as *anattā*. Without understanding the characteristics of *anattā*, one cannot distinguish *anattā*.

To attain liberation through contemplating non-self, an individual needs to contemplate the five aggregates through the four foundations of mindfulness. By contemplating so, he clearly realizes the characteristic of *anattā* through Insight knowledge. In the contemplation of each aggregate in terms of *anattā*, five modes, which are as alien, as emptiness, as vain, as void, and as non-self, are also significant. Each aggregate is contemplated as alien because of the nature of inability to have mastery exercised over itself, and other realities and because of intractability. It is contemplated as the emptiness of the permanence, beauty, pleasure, and self. It is considered vain due to its emptiness and trifling nature. It is contemplated as void, being devoid of the state of being an owner, abider, doer, experiencer, and manager. And, it is contemplated as non-self because of having no owner and so on. As a result, through contemplation of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*, which are related to the eighteen principal insights, one can remove three kinds of grasping - *diṭṭhi*, *māna*, and *taṇhā*. The four hallucinations, which are hallucinations of beauty, happiness, permanence, and self, are abandoned.

The Path and Fruition are named *suññata* Path and *suññata* Fruition or the void liberation through the contemplation of *anattā*, which is the gateway to liberation. Finally, understanding *anattā* leads one to the realization of *nibbāna*, the state void of self, cankers and defilements, etc. This realization is a supra-mundane realization in terms of seeing and developing. Seeing *nibbāna* occurs at the moment of the first lower Path (*sotāpattimagga*), and the supra-mundane realization as developing is at the other three higher Path moments.

It is observed that understanding the five aggregates as non-self is conducive to understanding ourselves, reducing ego and selfishness, and making the environment better. Understanding the nature of mind and matter is greatly conducive to attaining two kinds of basic *vipassanā* knowledge: knowledge of the discernment of mind and matter (*nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of causality (*paccayapariggaha ñāṇa*). If one can further contemplate

the four foundations of mindfulness with ardent effort, one can certainly attain higher levels of insight and knowledge, then ultimately final liberation—true inner peace if one has accomplished in fulfilling perfections. Even when he cannot yet attain higher levels of knowledge leading to final liberation, the researcher believes that he can become wise and live a peaceful life.

It is hoped that this study motivates readers and researchers to further investigate this unique teaching on which the Enlightened One has put much emphasis.

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THE IDEOLOGY OF *AHIMŚĀ*: ESTABLISHING PEACE THROUGH VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION

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Abstract:

The concept of *ahimśā*, or non-violence, is a cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy, emphasizing compassion, empathy, and the avoidance of harm to all living beings. This paper explores the practical application of *ahimśā* within the framework of applied Buddhism, focusing on the transformative potential of *vipassanā* meditation. *Vipassanā*, or “insight meditation,” is a meditative practice designed to cultivate self-awareness, mindfulness, and deep insight into the nature of reality. Through this practice, individuals can develop a heightened sense of interconnectedness and empathy, naturally fostering a commitment to *ahimśā*.

This study explores how *vipassanā* meditation serves as a tool for internalizing and embodying the principles of non-violence, providing a pathway for individuals to cultivate inner peace, emotional balance, and resilience in the face of conflict. By examining the historical contexts and modern-day applications of *ahimśā* in Buddhist communities, this research highlights how *vipassanā* meditation enhances personal well-being and contributes to collective harmony. The practice encourages practitioners to confront the roots of anger, hatred, and attachment - often the causes of violence - and instead nurture qualities such as patience, forgiveness, and loving-kindness (*mettā*).

The study also examines case studies in which applied Buddhism, particularly through *vipassanā* meditation, has been effective in peacebuilding efforts, conflict resolution, and social justice movements. It illustrates how *ahimśā*, when combined with the insight gained through meditation, provides a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges such as violence, inequality, and environmental degradation. By fostering an ethos of non-violence grounded in mindful awareness, this paper argues that *vipassanā* meditation serves as a powerful method for cultivating deep, sustainable peace

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at both personal and societal levels. Through the lens of applied Buddhism, *ahimsā* becomes not just an ethical ideal but a lived experience capable of transforming individuals, communities, and ultimately, the world.

Keywords: *Ahimsā, Buddhism, mindful awareness, peace, vipassanā meditation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The concept of *Ahimsā* in Buddhism

In Buddhist philosophy, *ahimsā*, meaning non-violence or non-harming, is a cornerstone of ethical living. Derived from the teachings of the Buddha, *ahimsā* goes beyond merely abstaining from physical violence; it encompasses restraint in words, thoughts, and intentions, forming a holistic approach to compassion. Rooted in the understanding of interdependence, it acknowledges that harming another being inevitably leads to negative consequences for oneself. The Buddha taught that by cultivating thoughts of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and refraining from harmful actions, individuals not only contribute to their liberation but also foster a more harmonious society. *Ahimsā*, therefore, is not passive but proactive - a practice that actively promotes empathy, respect, and universal kindness.

1.2. The importance of applied Buddhism

Applied Buddhism refers to the practical implementation of Buddhist doctrines in addressing contemporary societal challenges. By integrating core tenets such as *ahimsā* into modern life, this approach highlights the enduring relevance of ancient wisdom. Concepts of compassion and mindfulness are applied in conflict resolution, environmental stewardship, human rights advocacy, and personal growth. As part of applied Buddhism, *ahimsā* evolves from a theoretical ideal into a dynamic force for change, aligning spiritual practice with social engagement. In this way, *ahimsā* becomes a tool for justice, equality, and peace - capable of addressing the complexities of a globalized world while remaining deeply rooted in its philosophical foundations.

1.3. Purpose and scope of the study

This study aims to examine the transformative potential of *ahimsā* when combined with *vipassanā* meditation in promoting peace and well-being. *Vipassanā*, meaning “insight,” is a meditative practice that cultivates awareness and deep understanding of reality as it is. By fostering mindfulness and clear perception, *vipassanā* meditation strengthens one’s commitment to non-violence. This study explores the theoretical foundations of *ahimsā* within Buddhist ethics, details the practical aspects of *vipassanā*, and highlights case studies where these principles have been successfully applied to resolve conflicts and enhance personal growth.

II. AHIMŚĀ: A CORNERSTONE OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

2.1. Definition of *Ahimsā*

Ahimsā (Sanskrit: अहिंसा) is a term meaning “not to harm” (literally, “the avoidance of violence” - *hinsa*). The word is derived from the Sanskrit root

hims, meaning “to strike”; *hinsa* refers to injury or harm, while *a-hinsa* is its opposite, meaning “non-harming” or “non-violence.”

2.2. Comparison of *ahimsā* concepts between Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism

In Hinduism, *ahimsā* is rooted in the belief that all living beings are interconnected. It promotes nonviolence as a moral duty while allowing certain exceptions, such as self-defense or ritual sacrifices. Some Hindu texts argue that sacrificial killings can be justified for the greater good and the karmic benefit of the animals involved.¹

Jainism embraces the most rigorous application of *Ahiṁsā*, viewing non-violence as the supreme duty (*ahimsā Paramo Dharmah*)². Unlike Hinduism, Jainism makes no exceptions for rituals or professions that involve harm to living beings. Jains not only refrain from killing animals for food but also take extensive precautions to avoid harming plants and insects, demonstrating a profound commitment to minimizing harm. Even unintentional harm is considered morally significant, reflecting their meticulous ethical standards. However, like Hindus, Jains accept violence in self-defense and recognize the legitimacy of a soldier’s duty.

In Buddhism, *ahimsā* aligns with the first precept: refraining from killing any living being. Its practice is guided by compassion and mindfulness, with a focus on the intent behind actions. Unlike Jainism, Buddhism takes a more moderate stance, emphasizing the reduction of suffering rather than the absolute avoidance of harm. The karmic impact of violence is central to Buddhist teachings, highlighting the importance of ethical conduct and compassion in daily life.

Aspect	Hinduism	Jainism	Buddhism
Core Belief	<i>Ahiṁsā</i> is rooted in the belief that all living beings are interconnected and form a part of a universal whole.	<i>Ahiṁsā</i> is regarded as the supreme religious duty (<i>ahimsā Paramo Dharmah</i>).	<i>Ahiṁsā</i> aligns with the first precept: refraining from killing any living being.

¹ Patrick Olivelle, *The Āśrama System: The History and Hermeneutics of a Religious Institution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 112.

² Cf. Mahabharata (Shantiparva 262. 5)

Scope of Non-violence	Allows exceptions for self-defense and ritual sacrifices; some texts justify sacrificial killings as karmically beneficial for the beings involved.	No exceptions for ritual sacrifices or professions involving harm; a comprehensive commitment to non-violence, including avoidance of harm to plants and insects.	Emphasizes reducing suffering, with a focus on the intent behind actions rather than strict avoidance of harm.
Self-Defense	Justifies violence in self-defense and in fulfilling one's duty, such as in warfare or military service.	Accepts violence in self-defense and recognizes the duties of soldiers as legitimate.	Allows self-defense but emphasizes compassion and the minimization of harm.
Dietary Practices	Many Hindus follow vegetarianism, but it is not universally required.	Strict vegetarianism; avoids harm to all living beings, including insects. Honey is forbidden, and precautions are taken even in farming.	Vegetarianism is common, but dietary restrictions vary, with an emphasis on compassion in food choices.
View on Karma	Violence can result in negative karmic consequences but may be justified in certain ritual contexts.	All forms of violence generate harmful karma, and even unintentional harm is considered morally significant.	Violent actions generate negative karma, with a strong emphasis on intention and mindfulness.
Plant and Insect Harm	Acknowledges that plants are living beings but considers their use for food a necessity.	Strives to minimize harm to all living beings, including avoiding unnecessary harm to plants and refraining from activities such as night travel to prevent stepping on insects.	Less rigorous than Jainism, with an emphasis on avoiding intentional harm rather than all forms of harm.

2.3. Historical origins of *Ahiṁsā* in Buddhism

The concept of *ahiṁsā* (non-violence) traces its roots to the foundational teachings of Buddhism. It is enshrined in the first of the Five Precepts (*Pañca-sīla*), which urges followers to abstain from taking the life of any living being. This precept reflects the Buddha's profound respect for life and his emphasis on compassion as a path to liberation. During the Buddha's time, the principle of *ahiṁsā* distinguished Buddhism from other contemporary traditions by extending nonviolence beyond ritualistic contexts to encompass daily ethical conduct. Over the centuries, *ahiṁsā* has influenced the ethical frameworks of various Buddhist schools, contributing to broader discussions on peace, compassion, and human dignity across Asia and beyond.

2.4. The ethical dimensions of non-violence

Ahiṁsā in Buddhism transcends the mere avoidance of physical harm; it extends to thoughts, words, and deeds, emphasizing their profound interconnectedness. Buddhist ethics frame *ahiṁsā* as an active practice of compassion and generosity, where the cultivation of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*) is essential. At the heart of the Buddha's teachings, *ahiṁsā* aligns closely with the *Catu Brahmavihāra* (Four Sublime States) - *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). These states foster harmony with all beings by cultivating an attitude of universal goodwill. Together, they embody nonviolence by transforming thoughts, emotions, and behaviors into acts of empathy, kindness, and balance, thus laying the foundation for both inner peace and societal harmony.

***Mettā* (Loving-Kindness)**

Let none deceive another or despise any being in any state. Let none through anger or ill-will wish harm upon another.³ *Mettā* encourages unconditional goodwill toward all beings, transcending personal relationships. Unlike selective affection reserved for close ones, true loving-kindness extends even to strangers and adversaries, fostering inclusivity and reducing hostility. The practice of *mettā* prevents harm by transforming anger and hatred into love, aligning directly with the principle of *ahiṁsā*.

***Karuṇā* (Compassion):** One cultivates compassion for the welfare and happiness of all living beings.⁴

Karuṇā, the capacity to feel and alleviate the suffering of others, lies at the heart of *ahiṁsā*. Compassionate individuals refrain from causing harm because they recognize the shared human experience of pain. By understanding the root causes of suffering, as taught by the Buddha, practitioners cultivate empathy rather than judgment, reducing reactive violence. Compassion not only restrains harmful impulses but also inspires positive, healing actions.

³ Kd 5.8: "Na paro paraṃ nikubbetha, nātimaññetha katthaci naṃ kiñci; byārosanā paṭighasaññā, nāññamaññassa dukkhamiccheyya."

⁴ MN 61: "Karunāṃ bhāvanāṃ bhāveti, hitasukhāya sabbapāṇīnaṃ."

***Muditā* (Sympathetic Joy)**

Muditā refers to the genuine happiness and joy one feels in the success, well-being, and good fortune of others. Unlike envy or jealousy, *muditā* embraces joy selflessly, without attachment or personal desire: “May all beings be happy and secure; may their hearts be filled with joy.”⁵

Muditā, the joy in others’ success and happiness, counteracts envy and resentment. Jealousy often leads to negative actions and conflict, violating the principle of *ahimsā*. Practicing *muditā* dissolves these destructive tendencies, fostering harmony and reducing harm caused by competition or greed. Celebrating others’ well-being nurtures a peaceful and supportive community.

***Upekkhā* (Equanimity)**

Upekkhā represents balance and emotional stability, allowing one to maintain a calm mind amid life’s ups and downs while remaining free from attachment or aversion. It serves as the foundation for impartiality and deep *ahimsā* (non-violence): “With equanimity, one attains the liberation of mind, dwelling in a state of balance and peace.”⁶

Upekkhā is the ability to remain calm and balanced amid life’s highs and lows. Emotional equanimity prevents reactions driven by anger, fear, or desire - primary triggers of violence. A composed mind enables thoughtful and compassionate responses. By cultivating equanimity, individuals avoid impulsive actions that may cause harm, embodying the essence of *ahimsā* through mindful restraint and wisdom.

In this context, non-violence is not merely passive resistance but a proactive commitment to fostering harmony and understanding. Through mindfulness (*sati*) and ethical discipline (*sīla*), practitioners learn to replace aggression with patience and animosity with compassion, embodying the essence of *ahimsā* in every interaction.

III. AHIMŚĀ IN THERAVĀDA, MAHĀYĀNA, AND VAJRAYĀNA TRADITIONS

Buddhism’s diverse schools interpret and apply *ahimsā* according to their unique doctrinal frameworks.⁷ In *Theravāda* Buddhism, *ahimsā* is closely tied to the practice of *sīla* (abstaining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants) and the path of individual liberation (*arahantship*).⁸ Here, non-violence emphasizes strict adherence to ethical precepts,⁹ focusing on personal transformation and the cultivation of wholesome mental states. *Mahāyāna* Buddhism expands this concept through the Bodhisattva ideal,¹⁰ where *ahimsā* is practiced not only for personal enlightenment but also for the

⁵ Kd 5.8: “*Sukhino vā khemino hontu, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā.*”

⁶ DN 22: “*Upekkhā ca vimutti, upekkhāya cetovimuttiṃ upasampajja viharati.*”

⁷ Keown (2005), p. 30 – 40.

⁸ Gethin (1998), p. 170 – 175.

⁹ Harvey (2000), p. 45 – 55.

¹⁰ Williams (2009), p. 110 – 120.

benefit of all beings. The emphasis on universal compassion (*karuṇā*) leads to a broader application of nonviolence in both thought and action, reflecting an altruistic commitment to alleviating suffering. *Vajrayāna* Buddhism, while upholding *ahiṃsā*, sometimes employs unconventional methods in compassionate action. Practices that may seem paradoxical are grounded in a deeper understanding of ultimate reality (*śūnyatā*) and skillful means (*upāya*),¹¹ aiming to guide beings toward enlightenment with minimal harm.

IV. COMPREHENDING VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION THROUGH MAHĀSATIPATṬHĀNA SUTTA

4.1. Origins and development of *Vipassanā*

Vipassanā, derived from the Pāli prefix “vi” and the root “passanā” (to see), is often translated as “insight” or “clear-seeing”. The term signifies a profound way of perceiving reality. The prefix “vi” can imply “seeing in a special way” or function intensively to mean “deep seeing”. A synonymous term is *paccakkha* (Sanskrit: *pratyakṣa*), meaning “perceptible to the senses” or “direct experiential knowledge,” emphasizing the personal, immediate perception of truth rather than theoretical understanding.

Vipassanā encourages seeing life through the lens of three fundamental characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). Unlike conceptual thinking, it involves direct observation of the ever-changing nature of phenomena. The practice’s foundation is mindfulness (*sati*), a deliberate awareness that fosters clarity and insight. In this context, *Satipatṭhāna*, meaning “establishment of mindfulness,” serves as the foundational framework for developing insight into reality.

4.2. The four foundations of mindfulness in the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta*

The *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta*, considered a cornerstone of Buddhist meditation practice, presents the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as a direct path to liberation. The Buddha proclaimed this as the only way to purify the mind, overcome suffering, and realize *nibbāna*: This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for reaching the noble path, for the realization of *nibbāna*, namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.¹²

The Four Foundations are as follows: *Kāyānupassanā* – Contemplation of the body: Observing bodily processes such as breathing, postures, and movements to develop an awareness of the body’s impermanent and conditioned nature. *Vedanānupassanā* – Contemplation of feelings: Noting sensations as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral without attachment or aversion. *Cittānupassanā* – Contemplation of the mind: Becoming aware of the mind’s states - whether it is focused, distracted, angry, or peaceful - without

¹¹ Thurman (1995), p. 85 – 90.

¹² DN 22: “*Ekāyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā, soka-paridevānaṃ samatikkamāya, dukkadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya, nāyassa adhiḡgamāya, nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipatṭhānā.*”

judgment. *Dhammānupassanā* – Contemplation of mental objects: Observing phenomena like the Five Hindrances (desire, ill-will, restlessness, sloth, and doubt) and understanding their transient nature.

4.3. The role of mindfulness (*Sati*) and insight in cultivating *Ahimsā*

Mindfulness, as emphasized in the teachings of the *Maluṅkya* and *Bāhiya Suttas*, offers a simple yet profound technique for cultivating nonviolence (*ahimsā*). The Buddha taught:

Maluṅkayaputta Sutta	Bāhiya Sutta
<i>diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati,/ sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati,/ mute mutamat-taṃ bhavissati,/ viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati</i> ¹³	<i>Yato kho te bāhiya, diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati.</i> ¹⁴
“In the seen, there is only the seen; in the heard, there is only the heard; in the sensed, there is only the sensed; in the cognized, there is only the cognized. Thus, Bāhiya, you should train yourself.:	

This approach cultivates a direct experience of reality, free from conceptual overlays and judgments that often lead to conflict and harm. Through mindfulness, individuals gain a deeper awareness of their mental and emotional processes. *Vipassanā* reveals the transient nature of thoughts and emotions, enabling practitioners to observe anger, greed, and ignorance without being consumed by them. This awareness fosters conscious decision-making over reactive behavior. By recognizing impermanence and the interconnectedness of all beings, practitioners develop greater empathy and compassion, naturally aligning their actions with the principle of nonviolence.

Vipassanā’s transformative power lies in reshaping one’s relationship with suffering. By recognizing harmful impulses as conditioned and fleeting, practitioners cultivate patience, tolerance, and kindness. Mindfulness and insight gradually dissolve the roots of violence, fostering inner harmony and societal peace. Through this practice, the principle of *ahimsā* becomes a lived reality, promoting well-being and reducing conflict in human interactions.

The relationship between mindfulness (*sati*), insight (*vipassanā*), and *ahimsā* can be illustrated in the following chart:

Aspect	Mindfulness (<i>Sati</i>)	Insight (<i>Vipassanā</i>)	Application of <i>Ahimsā</i>
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¹³ SN 35.95 (S. IV. 72).
¹⁴ Ud 1.10 (Ud 6).

Definition	Awareness of present-moment experiences with a non-judgmental attitude.	Direct perception of the three characteristics: impermanence, suffering, and non-self.	Ethical behavior is based on non-violence or refraining from causing harm.
Focus	Observing thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they arise, without attachment or aversion.	Realizing the transient, interdependent, and ever-changing nature of all phenomena.	Cultivating compassionate and mindful responses instead of reacting impulsively.
Outcome	Enhanced self-awareness and improved emotional regulation.	Attaining liberation from suffering through deep wisdom and insight.	Transforming harmful tendencies into compassionate and ethical actions.

V. *VIPASSANĀ* MEDITATION AS A TOOL FOR EMBODYING *AHIṂSĀ*

Vipassanā is a form of meditation that perceives reality as it truly is. According to this practice, everything that arises is subject to cessation - phenomena arise and pass away in accordance with universal laws and dependent origination. Recognizing impermanence as the fundamental nature of existence allows one to see reality without illusion. Practicing *vipassanā* involves directly observing the arising and dissolution of phenomena through the six senses, their bases, and corresponding objects.

Through these gateways, practitioners directly experience the three characteristics of existence: suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anattā*). In observing these truths, one should avoid any attitude of rejection, suppression, or eradication toward what arises. For example, during meditation, if sensations such as heat, cold, pain, or itching arise in the body, the practitioner should acknowledge them clearly without attempting to resist or judge them. Likewise, one should neither cling to pleasant sensations nor reject unpleasant ones. Regardless of whether positive or negative thoughts emerge during meditation, the practitioner should remain non-reactive and refrain from interference.

This non-reactive awareness embodies the deep application of *ahimsā* (non-violence) in *vipassanā* practice. By maintaining such equanimity, the practitioner minimizes the arising of greed, hatred, and delusion - the three unwholesome roots. In the absence of these defilements, peace, harmony,

and happiness naturally emerge. This state of inner balance and freedom from mental impurities represents the highest realization of *ahimsā* in Buddhist meditation.

VI. MINDFULNESS OF DAILY ACTIONS AS THE PRACTICE OF *AHIMŚĀ*

When performing routine tasks such as washing your face or bathing, be mindful of the sensations and movements involved:¹⁵

Observe “washing, washing” as you feel the water - its touch, temperature, and the movement of your hands - without rushing or impatience. While dressing or tidying up, note each action as “touching, folding, closing,” maintaining full awareness and a calm, non-reactive mind. Eating becomes a deep practice of mindfulness and *ahimsā*: as you look at your meal, note “looking, seeing.” When extending your hand or using utensils, observe the actions as “reaching, holding, lifting.” Feel the texture of the food with a gentle touch, free from greed or aversion, and observe chewing as “chewing, chewing,” without attachment to flavors. As you swallow, note “swallowing, swallowing,” and feel the food moving down your throat with kindness and gratitude for nourishment.

Whether scooping soup or using chopsticks, observe each action patiently, noting ‘lifting, moving, tasting’ without rushing or reacting. This mindful attention to small actions cultivates calm, non-reactivity, and a mental state rooted in non-harming.

Therefore, practising mindfulness in this way limits the arising of greed, hatred, and delusion (*lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*) – the root causes of violence. By observing experiences with acceptance, without interference or aversion, one avoids the mental violence of this judgment or suppression. The calm and compassionate attention fostered leads to peace and inner harmony, the heart of *ahimsā*.

6.1. Progress through consistent practice

Initially, it is common to overlook certain actions due to the intricate nature of life’s dynamic movements. However, with persistence and increased concentration, practitioners develop a more refined awareness, nurturing a stable and non-violent state of mind. This heightened mindfulness transforms routine activities into meaningful moments of insight and tranquillity.

The practical application of *ahimsā* (non-violence) in everyday life requires a deliberate and continuous effort to cultivate virtues such as patience, forgiveness, and compassion. Specific methods focus on integrating non-violence into daily actions, speech, and thought processes.¹⁶

Furthermore, this analysis explores how consistent engagement with

¹⁵ Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha’s Way of Mindfulness*. London: Rider, 1962, p. 45.

¹⁶ Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha’s Way of Mindfulness*. London: Rider, 1962, p. 78.

vipassanā meditation can profoundly influence the mind, fostering heightened sensitivity to the principles of non-violence. *Vipassanā* plays a crucial role in mitigating destructive emotions such as anger, fear, and hatred, which are often precursors to violent behavior.

The psychological impact of *vipassanā* practice will be examined, particularly its efficacy in identifying and reducing emotional states linked to aggression, such as hostility, attachment, and resentment. This, in turn, cultivates a mental framework aligned with the ethical principle of *ahiṃsā*.

Additionally, this study will highlight historical instances where *ahiṃsā*, grounded in Buddhist philosophy, has effectively resolved conflicts. A notable example is Emperor Ashoka's transformation from a ruthless conqueror to a proponent of peace following his embrace of Buddhism.¹⁷

Vipassanā meditation has demonstrated significant success in diverse contexts, including correctional facilities, educational systems, and social justice movements, by fostering reconciliation and emotional healing. This section will present concrete case studies illustrating how meditation cultivates empathy and reduces violent tendencies.

Hence, the scope of *ahiṃsā* extends beyond human interactions to encompass all sentient beings and the natural world. This section will analyze how *vipassanā* practice fosters environmental awareness and activism, cultivating a profound sense of interconnectedness with the ecosystem and a commitment to sustainable living.

6.2. *Vipassanā* meditation and *Ahiṃsā*: A path to global peace

Conflicts, wars, and social instability have long plagued human civilization, driven by greed, hatred, and ignorance. Traditional approaches to conflict resolution - diplomatic negotiations, treaties, and military interventions - often fail to address the root causes of violence. A deeper transformation is necessary, one that begins at the individual level and extends to society at large. *Vipassanā* meditation, a profound practice of mindfulness and insight, offers a practical application of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) to resolve conflicts and cultivate lasting peace. By fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and compassion,¹⁸ *vipassanā* serves as a powerful tool in dismantling the psychological and social structures that perpetuate violence.

Vipassanā-based mindfulness techniques can play a vital role in diplomacy and conflict resolution by promoting mindful communication, emotional resilience, and skillful speech (*sammā vācā*). Leaders who meditate develop active listening skills and non-reactive speech, reducing hostility in negotiations. Diplomats and policymakers with meditation training remain calm under pressure, making rational, compassionate decisions. Mindfulness discourages

¹⁷ Richard Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*. London: Routledge, 1988, p. 104.

¹⁸ S. N. Goenka, *The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation as Taught by S. N. Goenka*, ed. William Hart. San Francisco: HarperOne, 1987, p. 65.

hate speech, misinformation, and inflammatory rhetoric, preventing the escalation of conflicts. For example, Mahatma Gandhi,¹⁹ inspired by Buddhist principles of *Ahimsā*, led India's independence movement through non-violent resistance, demonstrating the power of mindfulness in political activism.

Vipassanā meditation, deeply rooted in the principle of *ahimsā* (non-violence), offers a transformative and sustainable approach to addressing the world's conflicts - not merely by altering external structures but by initiating profound change within individuals, communities, and political systems. The cultivation of inner peace through *vipassanā* is not an isolated practice confined to personal well-being; rather, it serves as a foundational force that reshapes the ethical, social, and political dimensions of human interaction. By fostering self-awareness, equanimity, and compassion, this meditative discipline equips individuals with the clarity and moral resilience necessary to engage with the world in a way that transcends aggression and hostility.

The integration of mindfulness-based approaches inspired by *vipassanā* into leadership, education, and international diplomacy marks a critical step toward realizing a non-violent world – not as an abstract ideal, but as a tangible, achievable reality. When compassion and discernment inform governance, when ethical awareness is embedded in educational systems, and when conflict resolution strategies prioritize inner transformation over mere political negotiation, the path to lasting peace becomes clear. In this light, *vipassanā* is not merely a contemplative practice but a profound instrument for global harmony, capable of dismantling the psychological and structural roots of war, division, and suffering.

In essence, the practice of *vipassanā* meditation illuminates the profound truth that sustainable peace can never be imposed from the outside - it must emerge organically from within. As individuals cultivate self-mastery and insight, their capacity to contribute to a just and compassionate world is exponentially magnified. The principles of *ahimsā* and mindfulness thus serve as both a philosophy and a practical methodology, guiding humanity toward a future where nonviolence is not a temporary strategy but the very foundation of existence itself.

VII. CONCLUSION

Ahimsā, the foundational principle of nonviolence in Buddhist thought, extends far beyond the mere avoidance of physical harm; it embodies a profound ethical commitment to the sanctity of all life. Rooted in the teachings of the Buddha, *ahimsā* is not merely a passive state of refraining from violence but an active cultivation of compassion, wisdom, and ethical responsibility. It calls for a holistic approach to moral living that integrates non-harmful thoughts, benevolent speech, and actions that contribute to the well-being of all sentient beings. This principle fosters an awareness of interdependence, urging individuals to recognize the intricate web of existence in which their

¹⁹ Udith Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, p. 214.

thoughts and deeds reverberate beyond themselves.

In contemporary practice, the relevance of *ahimsā* is vividly illustrated through the discipline of *vipassanā* meditation. This meditative practice, grounded in heightened self-awareness and insight, enables practitioners to observe the arising and cessation of mental formations without attachment or aversion. By systematically cultivating mindfulness (*sati*), individuals gain deeper control over their impulses, fostering the capacity to respond to life's challenges with equanimity and nonviolence. *Vipassanā* meditation serves as an instrument of transformation, refining one's ability to recognize and uproot habitual patterns of aggression, resentment, or unwholesome tendencies, replacing them with patience, loving-kindness (*mettā*), and empathetic engagement.

The enduring significance of *ahimsā* becomes even more pertinent when considered within the broader sociopolitical and ecological context. In an era marked by increasing conflict, social injustice, and environmental crises, *ahimsā* provides an ethical framework that transcends personal conduct and extends into the collective responsibility of humankind. It is a principle that informs non-violent resistance, human rights advocacy, and sustainable environmental practices. By embracing *ahimsā*, individuals and communities engage in the conscious effort to dismantle systemic violence - whether in the form of war, structural oppression, or ecological destruction - and replace it with modes of existence that prioritize harmony, justice, and sustainability.

The synergy between *ahimsā* and mindfulness underscores the idea that non-violence is not a static ideal but a dynamic and ongoing practice. It requires unwavering vigilance, deep self-reflection, and the courage to confront one's ingrained prejudices, fears, and destructive tendencies. True *ahimsā* does not merely advocate the absence of harm but actively seeks to cultivate conditions that nurture peace, mutual understanding, and collective flourishing. Through this lens, nonviolence is seen not as a mere prohibition against harm but as an affirmative commitment to compassion and ethical responsibility in every sphere of human interaction.

By integrating *ahimsā* into both personal and collective consciousness, individuals contribute to the realization of a more harmonious world. This principle, deeply embedded in Buddhist ethics, serves as a timeless guide for navigating moral complexities with integrity, wisdom, and profound respect for the interconnectedness of all existence. In doing so, *ahimsā* becomes not only a philosophical ideal but a lived experience - one that illuminates the path toward personal liberation (*vimutti*) and the collective well-being of all beings. Thus, the practice of non-violence, when imbued with mindfulness and wisdom, emerges as a powerful catalyst for transformation - both within the individual and throughout society at large.

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PEACE OF MIND, PEACE OF WORLD: A SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

If there is inner peace, there is also the existence of inner enemies called selfishness and conflict. These very inner enemies emanate from ignorance, anger, and illusion and lead to suffering, not only for ourselves but also for everyone. These feelings in turn result in an unhappy mind which is without peace. On the other hand, thoughts and actions directed to the well-being of others bring happiness and peace to the mind. To heal the mind, we have to eliminate negative thoughts and their imprints and replace them with positive thoughts and imprints. The essential ingredients in this healing process are nothing outside of compassion, wisdom, and pure morality. Nowadays, in the technologically advanced world, each aspect of human life is strongly connected with technology. Mankind has looked to science and technology to bring benefit to human society, but creating harm or benefit depends on how human beings use it. If we ignore morality and do not recognize the factor of inner peace, of course, the problems brought by science and technology are the unwanted results. Hence, inner peace plays a very important role in contributing to building a peaceful world. As we know, Buddhism and science are two different fields, but Buddhism is receiving much attention from scientists and intellectuals today. On the intellectual path, science and Buddhism place human beings as subjects to decide their happiness or suffering without relying on anyone else. Buddhism originated in the East with a huge philosophical system focusing on the human psyche, neither mythical nor metaphysical, but both practical and efficient. Moreover, Shakyamuni Buddha also considered himself a teacher, and a guide, not a God, so He did not claim to be other than an ordinary human being with no influence from any God or external power. His enlightenment was due to His efforts, not from any external supernatural power. Likewise, we are also practitioners and get results because each of us has the potential to become a Buddha. It is not just a Buddha sitting on a lotus throne but a being

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with a peaceful mind and clear wisdom contributing to world peace. Science also has a long history with scientific revolutions in the west over each period, with significant achievements contributing to the development of mankind. Nowadays, science plays an important role in our society, and more and more scientists are paying attention, and exploring Buddhist research enthusiastically. What is the inner peace? What is the relationship between inner peace and world peace from a scientific perspective? And how to cultivate inner peace to achieve true happiness in the digital age? This is the purpose of this research.

Keywords: *Compassion, inner peace, inner enemies, morality, wisdom, world peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between inner peace and world peace is not a new topic but still attracts the attention of scholars and intellectuals. Much research has also been conducted over the past decades to elucidate this relationship, as well as present the way we can cultivate inner peace and its power can influence world peace. The purpose of Buddhism is to end suffering, so understanding inner peace is not a curiosity but to help us develop the power of self-transformation and attain happiness in the present life. Science and Buddhism are quite similar in that discoveries of the actual nature of reality are objective, and not influenced by others' preconceptions or beliefs. Science is like an instrument, intrinsically it is neither good nor bad, and we cannot define science as a philosophy or merely a belief system because science is a combination of mental operations. A strict systematic discipline to build and organize knowledge in the form of testable hypotheses helps us distinguish science from ignorance and misunderstanding because this system of knowledge is obtained through methodical, logical, academic, and practical research. The role of science is to rigorously evaluate every assumption before providing the correct answer. This very scientific method allows us to properly understand the nature of the world and keep everything sharply in focus. That is why we can describe science as a living activity. The goal of science is to freely explore the universe while adhering to sensible guidelines. Science is always based on facts from the natural world, which is investigated and evaluated using reasoning. Characteristics of science: Science's conclusions are always factual and supported by tested evidence. In Buddhism, the Buddha never directly answered the metaphysical questions relating to the origin of the universe because they are not connected with liberation, and are not fundamental to the holy life. Moreover, they do not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, or self-awakening. The Buddha only answered the questions relating to stress, the origination of stress, the cessation of stress, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress; which are connected with the goal, and are fundamental to the holy life because they lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calming, direct knowledge, self-awakening. The teachings of Buddhism aim to lead people from the realm of delusion and ignorance to the realm of enlightenment.

Nowadays, the digital age is advancing rapidly, but society is struggling to keep up because we are unprepared to deal with its impacts. Excessive use of digital technologies can cause problems such as anxiety, depression, and addiction, impacting people's mental health. In addition, the lack of knowledge about how to use technologies safely and responsibly leads to problems such as cyberbullying, online scams, and cybercrimes. Each of us always seeks happiness and desires to be happy. However, happiness is not only an inner state of mentality but also an interrelationship of physical and mental health. Moreover, we are not separate entities, but we are interbeings, and the relationship between us and everyone, as well as the environment around us, is interdependent or mutually dependent, so we are free to choose ways to bring happiness to ourselves and others. Within an individual, negative psychological states such as distress, depression, and anxiety have been found associated with a higher risk of mental illness, and negative thoughts have been found to play a critical role in depression and psychological maladjustment. So, positive thought plays an important role in creating and building inner peace. The more we dwell in inner peace, the healthier our minds become. The wholeness of mind and body accompanied by a sense of inner harmony is often reflected in wisdom. One person with peace of mind brings peacefulness to a group, one group with peace of mind brings peacefulness to a society, and one society with peace of mind brings peacefulness to the world. We know there are two types of environments: internal and external, in which the outer environment includes one's actual surroundings (noisy, peaceful, etc.), and the inner environment is one's mental condition, but the latter is the most important. Before discussing inner peace as well as its relationship with world peace, I would like to present Buddhist teachings through scientific evidence to understand why Buddhism always emphasizes the role of inner peace in contributing to harmony and peace in the world.

II. OVERVIEW OF BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES THROUGH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

2.1. Impermanence

Science has proven that everything from a subatomic elementary particle to the vast universe has a finite lifespan, all things are always changing, always transforming from one state to another, slow or fast depending on things, but transformation is the essence of everything. In Buddhism, the world is considered a plurality, with a process of infinite creation and disintegration that continues over time. The universe follows a cycle that includes four periods: formation, enduring, destruction, and voidness. In Buddhist cosmology, the cosmos is endless and beginningless, and we cannot fully comprehend the interdependence of everything in the universe, including a single atom, until we understand the law of dependent origination. Impermanence is a link between East and West, at the same time as Buddha, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus also emphasized the aspect of the constant flux of things (*panta rhei*): "One never steps in the same river twice", because the river is always flowing. In everyday life, impermanence is the most obvious thing to experience. Biology

tells us that every moment there are countless changes in every animal, plant, and even mineral. Millions of cells are born and die every moment, in our skin, in every part of our body. And even the billions of neurons that carry our thoughts until our last breath are constantly changing. It can be said that impermanence is the expression of time, of life. The Buddha described the world as an endless process of becoming. Everything is changeable, undergoing constant metamorphosis, mutation, and movement. Everything occurs in the moment. Nothing on the Earth possesses the character of absolute actuality. Everything that can be created may also be destroyed. Change is the essential essence of reality. By acknowledging the law of impermanence or change, the Buddha rejects the existence of eternal substances. He discovered the law of change, which scientists now recognize. Scientists believe that there is nothing substantial, solid, or palpable in the world. Everything never stays the same for two consecutive moments.

2.1.1. Non-self or selflessness

In the structure of matter, today's science has understood quite a lot about the material world, but it is a material viewpoint that the majority of scientists consider to be objective outside of consciousness. It is known that matter is not a homogeneous body. It is structured from very small particles called atoms. Twentieth-century science also penetrated the interior of the atom to understand the elementary particles that make up matter, because these particles are smaller and lower than atoms, so they are called subatomic particles, and see that the atomic center is a nucleus composed of two types of particles: protons and neutrons. In the second half of the 20th century, people went even deeper into the structure of protons and neutrons and found that they were made up of two types of quarks: up quarks and down quarks. Thus, with only 3 types of particles: up quark, down quark, and electron, the vast majority of matter on our planet has been created. Matter is built from the members of the lightest generation: the "up" and "down" quarks that make up the protons and neutrons of atomic nuclei; the electron that orbits within atoms and participates in binding atoms together to make molecules and more complex structures; and the electron- neutrino, which plays a role in radioactivity and thus influences the stability of matter. Organisms also formed from these particles, evolving from inorganic matter to organic matter, then living matter, and finally human beings, which are extremely complex and magical.

The Buddha taught that what we think of as something everlasting within us is a collection of physical and mental aggregates or forces, including body or matter, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. These forces are in constant fluctuation, never remaining the same for two consecutive moments. They are the fundamental forces of psychophysical life. When the Buddha investigated psychophysical life, he discovered only five aggregates or forces without any eternal soul. In the 18th century west, in contrast to Descartes who based his ideas on the symbolism of the "self" through the saying "*cogito, ergo sum*" which means "I think, therefore I am", the british philosopher David Hume, although he knew nothing about the teachings of Buddha more than

two thousand three hundred years ago, also believed that the “self” was just a collection of concepts in consciousness,¹ continuously following each other and always changing. Later, science also provided many arguments for the concept of no-self, for example, the human body consists of dozens of organs, thousands of parts, billions of cells, the deeper the analysis, the more we do not know which is the “self”. Even thoughts and emotions, we do not know which can be called the “self”. Moreover, the human body is always changing and constantly exchanging with the outside world. It is called external, but it is internal, because humans, physically and mentally, are located inside a great world, and are more or less related to every component in that world. Through many changes, differentiation, struggles, and adaptations, humans have reached the highest position thanks to their brain, which can be called the most sophisticated organ of life.

2.1.2. Einstein’s theory of relativity and Buddhism’s three idealistic realms

Einstein’s theory of relativity focuses on three important points: space, time, and the mass of matter, all of which are relative. In other words, this is a theory describing the structure of space and time in a unified entity called spacetime discovered by Albert Einstein. Relativity means that it does not exist independently, but depends on one another, meaning interdependent. So, this theory explains the nature of gravity as a result of the curvature of spacetime when matter and energy interact. Today’s theory of relativity has been proven. According to Walter Kaufmann (1902), he was the first person to confirm that electromagnetic mass depends on velocity.² Electromagnetic mass is the mass associated with the movement of electrons in atoms. This proves that the mechanical mass of an object is not fixed, has no entity, only apparent electromagnetic mass, or in other words, the mass of all objects has an electromagnetic origin. On the Earth, when an object is stationary, it still has mass because the Earth moves, the solar system moves, and the Milky Way moves, so nothing stands still. Therefore, all objects have mass. The origin of mass is the energy that makes electrons move. That energy is accumulated in the nucleus of the atom. So, there is an equivalence between mass and energy, expressed in Einstein’s famous formula: “ E (energy) = M (mass) $\times C^2$ (speed of light)”

There is a close relationship between mass and energy through the above formula, so if the mass is relative, meaning it can change, then energy is also relative, it can change, and energy can turn into physical mass. The notions of space, time, and mass in Einstein’s theory of relativity cannot be seen as absolutes or unchanging substances. Time is not a separate entity, space does not exist independently, and mass does not exist separately. Oppositely, they coexist as a four-dimensional continuum of space-time. Relativity revolutionized the understanding of space and time and related phenomena that went beyond intuitive ideas and observations. These phenomena have been described by

¹ David Hume, (2009): p. 38.

² Kaufmann (1902): p. 143 - 155.

precise mathematical equations and correctly confirmed by experiments. The theory of relativity has come close to Buddhist perception. What we consider real, objective, and outside of consciousness, Buddhism says is not real. When entering the quantum world, we will realize that everything is relative. Nothing is an independent and autonomous entity, including things that we have believed to be real for ages, such as space, time, matter, and quantity. The law of Dependent Origination is a realistic approach to comprehending the universe and is the Buddhist counterpart of Einstein's theory of relativity. The idea that everything is nothing more than a collection of relationships is similar to our scientific understanding of the material universe. Because everything in this universe is conditioned, relative, and interdependent, there is no such thing as a permanent entity, also known as an ego or an immortal soul, as many think. Every *dharma* is interdependent and interacts with one another. They appear, exist, and disappear indefinitely; they are not generated or controlled by anyone. This insight allows us to look deeply at everything as it truly is. When we recognize that we are interbeing and the relationship between us and everyone as well as the environment around is interdependent or mutually dependent, we know that we are not separate entities, we are free to choose ways to bring happiness for ourselves and others.

2.2. A common foundation is wisdom

The fundamental meeting point between Buddhism and science is based on wisdom. Science is based on understanding built by human reason. Buddhism is also based on human wisdom, not faith. Buddhism emphasizes wisdom. Although faith has an important position in the initial stages, wisdom plays a prime role in attaining the goal. The Buddha also taught us not to believe anything simply because we have heard it many times, it is a tradition or a rumor, it is true to the books and scriptures, it sounds reasonable, it fits a philosophical system, it is logical reasoning, it suits our point of view, the person saying it appears trustworthy, or it is spoken by our teacher.³ Instead, we must investigate before accepting and practicing it.

2.3. Cause and effect

Although the law of cause and effect existed before Buddhism, it was integrated into Buddhist teachings and is one of the fundamental pillars of science because all scientific advances aim to establish correlations from cause to effect between observed phenomena. The Buddhist idea of cause and effect is a scientific philosophy based on the natural law of the universe, with no explicit reward or punishment from any powerful being. Understanding this, we gladly accept the exceptional suffering that comes as a result of our own bad decisions from the past. Cause means the possibility of producing an effect, therefore if a cause exists, its consequence can occur. And an effect is anything created by its causes. The causes that formed in the past will manifest as effects in the present, while the causes that formed in the present

³ *Kalama Sutta: The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry*, Soma Thera. (trans.), available at: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org>.

will manifest as effects in the future. The law of cause and effect applies to all aspects of life. Positive thoughts, talks, and actions will lead to happiness, which is a wonderful effect. However, unpleasant thoughts, utterances, and actions will result in sadness; these are negative consequences. According to Buddhism, what occurs to us today is the result of our previous actions, both in this lifetime and in others. So, what we do today will happen to us in the future. This is also the general principle of *karma*. We can control our fate, including our physical and mental states. Each person has limitless potential, but why don't we tap into it? Therefore, there is nothing very mysterious to see the law of cause and effect that takes place as a result of our actions. In science, the transaction from cause to effect is natural. The Buddha's discovery of cause and effect was also a discovery of natural science, which may be applied to both spiritual and everyday life to achieve the supernatural ideal. As a result, as scientist Einstein stated: "Buddhism is a science that is both natural and supernatural". Summarily, we can say that although Buddhism and science are different in the object of study, the method of observation, and the pursuit of knowledge, however, they have many things in common: "Man is the subject who attains wisdom by himself through practice. The foundation to attain happiness is wisdom cultivated from inner peace. Recognize that all things are closely related to each other, constantly changing according to natural laws, and have a mutual inter-relationship. Test all types of phenomena before giving the right answer. Always maintain the spirit of practicality and experimentation along with criticism and openness." In brief, Buddha is not a God, but only an Enlightened person, who himself realized the non-dual mind which is the essence of the universe and all things. *Shakyamuni Buddha* attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. He attained the supernatural powers which are the inherent attributes of the enlightened mind, fully appeared. For space, He saw throughout the three thousand great thousand worlds in the three realms, which are the desire realm, the Form realm, and the Formless realm. For time, the Buddha also saw throughout the past and future without beginning or end (beginningless and endless). For quantity, He saw countless worlds, objects, and living beings, without distinction of size, from the vast universe to the microscopic world of extremely small objects that in the past had no descriptive name, so they were called microscopic dust. According to scientists, the Buddha saw the whole subatomic world, even objects such as quarks, electrons, and neutrinos. That seeing was extremely transcendent, and he recognized even extremely short moments called instants. That's called the universal knowledge of a Buddha, which is knowing the whole time and space. The Buddha understood the emptiness of the material atom, but this was not until the end of the 20th century. This means that it is only after 25 centuries that the leading scientists of the human world understand and discover the quark with its strange properties, that we can understand the emptiness of Buddhism. Therefore, Buddhism is not just a religion or a mere belief. It is a teaching for all human beings of all times. The goal of Buddhism is selfless service, goodwill, peace, and relief from suffering. The practice of the Buddha's teachings will develop an inner awakening of compassion and wisdom. He also

advised us not to believe anything we hear without verifying and testing its value. This is one of the special things of Buddhism.

III. ACTIVITIES OF MIND AND BRAIN

Mind plays a role in the subjective side of things. In general, mind refers to inner experience, both conscious and unconscious, including thought, cognition, memory, desire, emotional experiences, states of mind, feelings, and even the sense of transcendence.⁴ The brain is referred to as the objective side. It is the physical stuff between our ears with the complex architecture of interrelated neurons and the electro-chemical processes activating and connecting them. Besides, the brain is embedded in larger systems, including the nervous system as a whole, so it can send and receive a large amount of information. Understanding the above definitions, we have questions concerning the activities of the mind and brain. Are the activities of the human mind, including thoughts, feelings, and memories, just products of brain activity? Or conversely, are brain activities governed and controlled by our minds? Or another way, is there a mind that exists and operates separately from the human body? We know that the brain activities are through a mixture of specialization of functions because there are parts of the brain doing specialized things. It is not easy to talk about specialization and function in just one place. It is a dense network if we have only a little bit of information about it. The complexity of the brain is hard to understand. So, when we have fully understood the functions of the brain and mapped the pathways of communication among the regions and specialized tissues of the brain, we can see a high interconnection and explain the mind because the subjective experience not only depends upon but also consists of brain activity. In the formation of channels, three main channels develop from the umbilical cord of the fetus during its gestation. One channel extends upward to form the brain. Another one extends into the middle part of the body to form the aorta and its subsequent branches. The last channel branches downward to form the secret organs of males and females.⁵ There are four types of channels of existence. In the brain, there exist five hundred channels of sensory functions that are responsible for perceiving and grasping their respective objects. In the heart, there exist five hundred channels of memory functions that are responsible for the clarity and development of the consciousness. In the navel, there exist five hundred channels of constructive functions that are responsible for the formation and development of the bodily systems. In the genitals, there exist five hundred channels of reproductive functions that are responsible for progeny and family lineage. All of these channels relate to each other and regulate the functions of every component of the body to sustain life.⁶ The

⁴ Dalai Lama, (2020). *Science and philosophy in the Indian Buddhist classics*, Vol. 2: *The mind*. India: Simon and Schuster, p. 39.

⁵ Gonpo, Y. Y., and Trogawa Paljor, (trans.). *The Root Tantra and the Explanatory Tantra: From the Four Tantras of Tibetan Medicine*. Men-Tsee-Khang Publications, 2008. p. 62.

⁶ Gonpo, Y. Y., and Trogawa Paljor, (trans.). *The Root Tantra and the Explanatory Tantra*:

interconnecting channels are of two types: white (nerves) and black (blood vessels) channels. The brain is considered as the base of the nervous system from which the spinal channel descends like a descending root, this is the white life-force nerve. So, the brain is similar to a great ocean from which all the white nerves arise. The white life-force channel is the main controller and regulator of the external and internal parts of the body. Nineteen peripheral nerves are responsible for all physical mobility, in which thirteen concealed nerves are connected with the internal organs like suspended silk cords, whereas six visible nerves, which further branch into sixteen minor nerves, are connected with the outer limbs.⁷ The body itself is labeled as a great nerve for existence with four principal groups, each of which contains twenty-four channels and five hundred minor channel nerves. There are twenty-four channels each about the sensory organs of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and bodily sensations, which respectively facilitate the experience of their associated objects, visible form, sound, smell, taste, and texture.⁸ The head is the place where the brain is pervaded by the five sense faculties. The nerves of the five sense faculties are connected to the cerebellum, which is located toward the back of the skull, constituting the principal basis of the body faculty. As stated above, there are two kinds of consciousness, such as sensory consciousness and mental consciousness, in which sensory consciousnesses have its close dependence on their physical sense organs and is contingent on the presence or absence of physical sense organs as well as on how clear or unclear the senses are. That is why the physical sense organs are recognized as the unique dominant conditions of sensory consciousness. When any of the sense faculties are damaged, sensory consciousness will be influenced. Also, when the last breath stops, blood flow within the brain ceases, and all the functions of the brain come to an end. The brain is the basis of physical sense faculties and is the controller of the components of the body, such as the sense faculties, the internal organs, and the vessels. There is a mutual interdependence between the brain and the cerebellum, the organs, the internal organs, the vessels, the water nerves, the great elements vessels, and the water nerves when they all perform their specific functions, even the subtle physical components of the brain alone could not perform any function whatever without mutual interdependence. The center of the brain plays an important role as the conduit for the nerves facilitating the flow of winds and the movement of drops as well as the flow of drops and winds to other areas.⁹ Besides sensory consciousness, mental consciousness is different because although any of the sense faculties are damaged, mental consciousness is not damaged. The event of Vietnamese most venerable Thich Quang Duc in Saigon, Vietnam on 11/06/1963, in

From the Four Tantras of Tibetan Medicine. Men-Tsee-Khang Publications, 2008. p. 63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁸ Dalai Lama, (2020). *Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics, Vol. 1: The Physical World.* India: Simon and Schuster, p. 409 - 410.

⁹ Dalai Lama, (2020). *Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics, Vol. 2: The Mind.* India: Simon and Schuster, p. 413.

protest against the discriminatory policies of the government of Southern Vietnam, is an extreme example. The sixty-seven-year-old monk was immobile in the lotus position when his body was consumed by flames. This proves that the power of the mind for such intense pain is unimaginable. Mindfulness helps the meditators turn toward pain and focus one's whole attention on it rather than try to evade or suppress it. The signature of pain in the brains of more experienced meditators is different from that of beginners for the reason that meditators with the most experience had the largest reductions in activity in three brain regions, such as the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and a seahorse-shaped structure called the hippocampus. This research was done by Joshua Grant at the University of Montreal and his fellow researchers by using fMRI to scan the brains of Zen meditators with at least a thousand hours of practice under their belts.¹⁰ The discoveries of Grant and his fellow researchers also show that the prefrontal cortex of experienced meditators is always in a state of quiet during pain. This accords with the aim of mindfulness paying attention to sensations without passing judgment or trying to change anything. It is not easy for ordinary people without mind-training because the association of pain and psychology can decrease the quality of life, and put severe limits on everyday activities. When the pain is arriving, experienced meditators can use mindful acceptance to reduce its unpleasantness. They showed decreased activity in their prefrontal cortex and increased activation in the insula and secondary somatosensory cortex, where data from receptors all over the body for stimuli such as pressure, pain, and warmth are processed. So, when an experienced meditator can reduce the unpleasantness of the pain, these areas of the brain are more activated. They open themselves up completely to the experience of pain without judging it or trying to change it. We can say that through mindfulness, we can learn to accept both pleasant and painful sensations with equanimity, which is also at the heart of the Buddha's teaching about suffering. Mindful awareness, or mindfulness, is the practice of observing one's inner experiences in a way that is fully aware but nonjudgmental. That is why Buddhist meditation is not only a practice of silencing the mind but also working with the mind. Neuropsychiatrist Jeffrey Schwartz of the University of California-Los Angeles suspected that signals capable of changing the brain could arrive not only from the outside world through the senses but also from the mind itself. Schwartz and colleague Lewis Baxter had launched a behavior-therapy group to study and treat obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). As a result, cognitive-behavior therapy has the power to systematically change faulty brain chemistry in a well-identified brain circuit, when willful and mindful effort can alter brain function. Such self-directed brain changes (neuroplasticity) are a genuine reality, which is why he concluded that mental action can alter the brain chemistry of an OCD patient. Therefore, the mind can change the brain.¹¹

¹⁰ Joshua A. Grant, et al. (2011): p. 150 - 156.

¹¹ Sharon Begley (2007): p. 159.

IV. THE MINDFUL BRAIN

The changes in the brain neatly reflect the two distinct components of mindfulness meditation: “focused attention” and “open monitoring.” The focused attention on the breath helps us create a sense of calm to combat anxieties and relax the muscles. The function of open monitoring is to tune in to the sensory experience of pain with an accepting attitude, without judgment. The very open monitoring increases activation of the insula and somatosensory cortex and decreases the prefrontal cortex activation. By practicing mindfulness, we have good control over our attention, we can place attention wherever we want. When the attention is steady, our mind is not rattled or hijacked by whatever pops into awareness, but stably present, grounded, and unshakeable. That is why, mindfulness is well-controlled attention. Attention is like a spotlight, and what is illuminated by it streams into our mind and shapes our brain. So, attention is perhaps considered the single most powerful way to reshape your brain.¹² There are three needs balanced in the flow of attention that are managed by the brain, such as keeping information in awareness, updating awareness with new information, and seeking the right amount of stimulation. The brain cannot be fully attentive unless it is fully awake. Struggling to pay attention when we are tired is like spurring an exhausted horse to keep running uphill, so using intention, taking care of our health, staying awake and alert, quieting the mind, and abiding as awareness are also the way to improve our attention. Whichever our mind is running, generosity, kindness, compassion, awakening, threat, grievance, and loss, neurons are firing and wiring together. So, why do we not learn how to use our mind to shape the wiring of our brain in a profound way to support ourselves on the path of awakening? Any aspect of the mind that is not transcendental must rely upon the physical processes of the brain. That is why apart from potential transcendental factors, the brain is the necessary and proximally sufficient condition for the mind because the brain is nested in a larger network of biological and cultural causes and conditions, and is affected itself by the mind. Therefore, an awakening mind means an awakening brain, the mind is what the brain does. Throughout history, not less unsung people as well as great teachers alike have cultivated remarkable mental states by generating remarkable brain states, or experienced Tibetan practitioners go deep into meditation, they produce uncommonly powerful and pervasive gamma brainwaves of electrical activity. This proves that there is neither the existence of the body, including the brain, as a mere mass of matter, nor does the mind or consciousness exist as a separate entity apart from the body. So, there is no issue of monism or duality of mind-matter here, because just like two chemicals when combined, they turn into a third substance, likewise, the accumulated mind, past karma, when combined with the present form, we say genes, both form and mind transform into a new life. We do not need an EEG or a Ph.D. in neuroscience to observe your experience and the world, we are still possible to understand how to affect our brain to become a

¹² Rick Hanson, Ph.D., & Richard Mendius, M.D. (2009): p. 155.

happier and kinder person. We still remember more than two thousand years ago, a young man named Siddhartha spent many years training his mind and thus his brain before attaining enlightenment. On the night of His awakening, He deeply looked inside His mind, which reflected and revealed the underlying activities of His brain, and saw both the causes of suffering and the path leading to freedom from suffering. Then, till today, we have a teaching from Him that: (1) Water the fires of greed and hatred to live with integrity, (2) Steady and concentrate the mind to see its confusions, (3) Develop deep insight.

To get this, we need to practice virtue, mindfulness, and wisdom, which are the three pillars of Buddhist practice, as well as the wellsprings of everyday well-being, psychological growth, and spiritual realization. Why are these three pillars important in Buddhism? Firstly, virtue involves regulating the actions of our deeds, words, and thoughts to create benefits for ourselves and others. In the brain, virtue draws on top-down direction from the prefrontal cortex and relies on bottom-up calming from the parasympathetic nervous system and positive emotions from the limbic system; Secondly, mindfulness involves the skillful attention to both your inner and outer worlds. Because the brain learns mainly from what we attend to, mindfulness is the doorway to taking in good experiences and making them a part of ourselves; Thirdly, wisdom help us understand what is good, what is bad, what is useful, and what is useless, in other words, the causes of suffering and the path to cessation of suffering through which we can let go of the useless things and strengthen the useful things, especially, we can understand the emptiness of everything, meet the pleasure without attaching, and meet the pain without hiding.

V. INNER PEACE AND ITS POWER

The above analysis along with the proof of science proves that each of us is not an individual that exists independently. So, each piece is a unit constituting world peace. Before understanding what inner peace is, we should penetrate the meaning of interdependence. The term “interdependence” is translated from the Sanskrit phrase “*paṭicca-samuppāda*” which means “to be by co-emergence” or “dependent origination”. It implies that everything is interdependent with the world. The teachings of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination) emphasize impermanence and non-self, as everything is always changing and interconnected according to various causes and conditions. The conditions that allow us to exist, change, and mature stem from something other than ourselves. Once we understand how our world is created, we will become conscious participants in that creation, because the world in which we live and experience is generated in every moment; we are also a part of this process of Interdependent co-arising. The Buddha stated the fundamental idea of Dependent Origination by saying: “When this is, that is/ This arising, that arises/ When this is not, that is not/ This ceasing, that ceases.” From here, we perceive that we have an interdependence with the world. This explains why practicing Buddhists are filled with an irresistible compassion toward all living beings when they know that there is an interrelationship between them and others. For example, those who have met His Holiness Dalai Lama, or Most Venerable Thich Nhat

Hanh will experience their energy of wisdom and compassion from them. They can keep quiet without speaking anything, but we still feel a peacefulness from them. A thorough awareness of interdependence helps us raise a desire to help all sentient beings. It is a boundless compassion that the person with inner transformation cultivates. Everything is closely related and interrelated, dependent on each other. This is clearly understood in Buddhism, through the principle of Dependent Origination: “When this exists, that exists; when this appears, that appears. When this does not exist, that does not exist; when this ceases, that ceases”. Not long ago, modern physics proved this, through Foucault’s pendulum experiment (always going in one direction, no matter where it is placed in space), or the EPR paradox (Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen: when a nucleus disintegrates into two particles A and B, each particle seems to “predict” the direction of the other particle). Scientists confirm that at the microscopic level as well as at the macroscopic level, the universe consists of mutual relationships and has a total, undivided order. Each part contains the whole, and the whole reflects each part, so a speck of dust contains the whole universe, and when a flower blooms, the whole world is revealed.

Buddhism advocates that all things exist only concerning others, known as mutual causality. An event can only occur because it is contingent on other variables. Buddhism views the world as a wide stream of events that are interconnected and engage in one another. We easily misunderstand that there are autonomous entities completely separate from us, but it is only a flow in dependence on other factors. In other words, all of reality is present in each of its parts, no entity independent of the whole can exist anywhere in the universe. Penetrating the notion of interdependence, we understand why we should practice inner peace because it is not peace only for ourselves but for those around us. This is the practice that helps us know how to be in harmony with life. Everything we do should emanate from the heart and peaceful mind in which true happiness is present. Due to ignorance of interdependence, our peace of mind is absent. As a result, we do not appreciate what we have even a moment of breath. So, practicing inner peace is a calm living activity with awareness that helps us fully feel the value of life. The spiritual nutrition for a busy society is inner transformation, self-awakening, and spiritual maturity with warm-hearted and loving-kindness.

5.1. What is inner peace?

Inner peace (or peace of mind) has been studied and written for centuries in philosophy, religion, and intellectual writings, with a few differences in definitions and a few motifs recurring again. Inner peace is generally defined as a state of mentality and spirituality at peace, or a sense of calmness, balance, and stability. His holiness Dalai Lama defines peace of mind as being rooted in affection and compassion without an insensitive and apathetic state of mind. This is a high level of sensitivity and feeling because a calm or peaceful state of mind does not mean being spaced out or empty.¹³ Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh

¹³ Dalai Lama, & Cutler (2009): p. 115.

defines peace as every step, being awake, and alive in the present moment.¹⁴ Inner peace should be practiced in daily activities, such as breathing, eating, drinking, sitting, walking, etc. All activities are maintained with mindfulness, helping our body and mind become gentle and peaceful. Of course, peacefulness is not only for us but everyone will also profit from it. His instruction is like a glass of water in the desert for those interested in both Buddhism and the world.¹⁵ Besides, peace of mind is defined as an internal state of peacefulness and harmony. In other words, it is regarded as a state of well-being different from hedonic happiness and is characterized by the affective states of internal peace and harmony.¹⁶ Or, inner peace is generally defined as a low- arousal positive emotional state coupled with a sense of balance or stability.¹⁷ In addition, peace of mind also means balance, equanimity, even-mindedness, harmony, and stability.¹⁸ From the above definitions of inner peace or peace of mind, we are conscious that this is a state that is always obtainable through the cultivation of patience, not only through prayers and rituals. Moreover, inner peace can be unreachable without the practice of tolerance. To do so, anger and jealousy are not allowed to prevail in our minds as the Buddha taught: “An ill-directed mind inflicts greater harm on oneself than an enemy or hater can do to another.”¹⁹ So, inner peace feels like a tranquil state of mind that cannot be easily disturbed. Peace of mind is within our reach if we know how to be present and control our thoughts, although it is not easy. Enjoying each present moment is an invaluable gift because we cannot have any opportunity to receive it again. We are living in a world full of contradictions along with the rapid development of intelligence technology, people become increasingly separated and lonely, and each individual is more isolated than ever before, even in their family. Mutual understanding and sincerity are severely lacking. One cannot trust another, no matter how excellent they are. So, it is time to look back on our lifestyle and cultivate inner peace toward a sustainable developed society.

5.2. How to cultivate inner peace?

Many people aspire for inner peace but only a few accomplish it. We persuade ourselves that if we do yoga or practice meditation every day, we will find inner tranquillity or experience inner calm. Activating our inner peace is more complicated than that. Inner peace cannot be achieved only through

¹⁴ Hanh, T. N. (1995): p. 17.

¹⁵ Hanh, T. N. (1987): p. 5.

¹⁶ Lee, Y. C., Lin, Y. C., Huang, C. L., et al. (2013). The construct and measurement of peace of mind. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14(2), p.571 - 590. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9343-5>

¹⁷ Chérif, L., Niemiec, R., & Wood, V. (2022). Character strengths and inner peace. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 12(3), p.16 - 34. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v12i3.2195>

¹⁸ Desbordes, G., Gard, T., Hoge, E. A., et al. (2015). Moving beyond mindfulness: Defining equanimity as an outcome measure in meditation and contemplative research. *Mindfulness*, 6(2), p. 356 - 372. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-013-0269-8>

¹⁹ *Dhp* verse 42. p. 29.

external work and effort. For example, waking up in a good mood, eating well, participating in things we love throughout the day, and going to bed thinking about what we are grateful for. We believe that we have achieved inner peace. Buddhism says no. Inner peace has to be practiced with awareness naturally without any influence from the outer environment. That is the best medicine for our body and mind and is also the most wonderful way to live. All daily activities should be done at peace. It means inner peace is with us at all times. We should remember that inner peace easily gets disturbed when we interact with the world. That is why we should be still, quiet, and observe rather than commenting or judging everything. When we constantly comment on the world, right or wrong, good or bad, should or should not, then our efforts to maintain peace of mind are disturbed. As a result, we are not able to achieve inner peace whereas it is within our reach. During the day, we make thousands of decisions based on external circumstances that diminish the inner peace. If we constantly engage with our thoughts, labelling something as positive or negative, there is no time to experience that inner peace. Quiet moments are where we can access our inner peace. We do not need to hold onto the consequences or identify everything as good or evil. We will always be able to discover the bottom of the lake if we embrace radical acceptance of what is and seek out intentional times of stillness and silence throughout the day. To keep the water clear and our inner peace present, we must choose to be participants in life rather than commentators on life. When we do with awareness, we feel at peace because our minds stop delivering continual commentary and can simply exist. We cease classifying things as good or bad and let them simply be. Inner serenity, which comes from inside, remains constant even as circumstances change. So, inner peace must be nurtured and fostered through mindful living. By consciously cultivating inner peace, we may discover a sense of serenity, tranquillity, balance, and stability that we may carry with us at all times, in good and bad situations. In today's fast-paced world, it's beneficial to practice aware breathing. Conscious breathing can be practiced anywhere, including at work, home, driving, and on public transportation. There are numerous activities we may do to improve our conscious breathing as long as we know how to control our inner thoughts with peace and see everything in focus. Peace and happiness are present in every moment. We do not need to go anywhere to find it because peace is right here and now. It is a wonderful moment. Mindfulness means accepting all pleasant and unpleasant experiences without getting caught up in them emotionally or trying to push them away.²⁰ So, mindfulness is the practice of being present and aware of one's thoughts, emotions, and environment without passing judgment. Meditation is the technique of concentrating one's thoughts and attaining a state of peace and relaxation. Both practices have been demonstrated to have significant mental and physical health advantages, including less stress and anxiety, improved focus and concentration, and increased feelings of well-being and happiness. These habits have also been related to lower blood pressure,

²⁰ Kingsland (2016): p. 79.

better sleep, and fewer signs of depression. Mindfulness and meditation are very beneficial for people who suffer from anxiety. These techniques can help people become more aware of their thoughts and emotions, allowing them to better control feelings of anxiety and stress. Techniques such as mindful breathing can also be used to relax the body and alleviate physical symptoms of anxiety. Mindfulness and meditation are also effective tools in the search for inner peace. Individuals who apply these techniques to their daily lives can reduce stress and anxiety, improve attention and concentration, and boost their sense of well-being and happiness. We can practice body scanning, mindful breathing exercises, or focusing on visualization, focusing on our thoughts and emotions without judgment, as the Buddha taught in the *Dhammapada*: “Mindfulness is the path to the deathless/ Heedlessness is the path to death/ The mindful do not die;/ But the heedless are as if dead already.”²¹ Here, we can see a special thing is that the practice of meditation in Buddhism not only quiets the mind but also works with the mind. The core practice of mindfulness involves making a conscious effort to live non-judgmentally in the present moment, acknowledging thoughts, feelings, and sensations as they arise, and accepting them just as they are. This practice helps us with psychological challenges more objectively, rather than with automatic responses based purely on emotions, fears, and preconceptions.²² In short, peace does not imply the absence of battles or noiseless surroundings; rather, it is a sense that exists within our hearts. Through consistent practice, we can reduce our inner torments to a lower level, resulting in an inner serenity that makes us more sensitive to the pain of others. By gradually grasping the global interconnection of beings, we begin to see the world differently and act more justly. People who have dedicated themselves to the service of others exude harmony like the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, bringing out the best in people. It is also the power of inner peace.

VI. NEW FINDINGS ABOUT THE BRAIN AND MIND

On April 19, 2023, the medical newsletter of the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, authored by *Tamara Bhandari*,²³ revealed a new study by researchers that there is a connection between the body and mind in building into the structure of the brain. The study shows that parts of the brain area controlling movement are plugged into networks involved in thinking and planning, and in control of involuntary bodily functions such as blood pressure and heart rate. The discoveries represent a literal linkage of body and mind in the very structure of the brain through which we can understand why anxiety makes some people want to pace back and forth; and why stimulates the vagus nerve, which regulates internal organ functions such as digestion and heart rate, may alleviate depression; and why people who exercise regularly have a more

²¹ *Dhp* verse 21, p. 26.

²² Kingsland (2016): p. 29.

²³ Bhandari, T. *Mind-body connection is built into brain, study suggests*, available at: <https://medicine.washu.edu/news/mind-body-connection-is-built-into-brain-study-suggests/>, 2023

positive outlook on life. So, by practicing mindfulness, we can calm our body and mind. The researchers found that there are connections between the highly active parts of the mind to the parts of the brain that control breathing and heart rate. If we calm one down, it absolutely should have feedback effects on the other. Moreover, the news on May 1, 2023, released from the Michigan Medicine-University of Michigan reported that a new study found brain wave patterns in coma patients who died after cardiac arrest.²⁴ This new study, published in the scientific journal of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, provides early evidence of a surge of activity correlated with consciousness in the dying brain. The study, led by Jimo Borjigin, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Molecular & Integrative Physiology and the Department of Neurology, and her team is a follow-up to animal studies conducted almost ten years ago in collaboration with George Mashour, M.D., Ph.D., the founding director of the Michigan Center for Consciousness Science. The team identified four patients who died due to cardiac arrest at the hospital while they were being monitored by an Electrocardiogram (ECG). All four patients were comatose and unresponsive. They were eventually determined to be beyond medical assistance and, with the permission of their families, removed from life support. After removing the breathing support tube, two patients showed an increase in heart rate along with an increase in gamma wave activity, considered the fastest brain activity and linked to consciousness. Furthermore, activity was detected in the so-called hot region of the neural correlates of consciousness in the brain, the junction between the temporal, parietal and occipital lobes in the back of the brain. This region has been correlated with dreams, visual hallucinations in epilepsy, and alternate states of consciousness in other brain studies. These two patients had previously reported having seizures, but had no seizures in the hour before their death, explained Dr. Nusha Mihaylova, associate professor in the Department of Neurology. The other two patients did not have a similar increase in heart rate after life support was removed, nor did they have an increase in brain activity. Dr. Nusha Mihaylova said: "We were unable to make correlations of observed neurological signs of consciousness with corresponding experiences in the same patients in this study. However, the observed findings are certainly interesting and provide a new framework for our understanding of covert consciousness in the dying humans." Larger, multi-center studies using EEG-monitored ICU patients who survive cardiac arrest could provide critical data for determining if these bursts in gamma activity are indications of concealed consciousness even near death. Therefore, these are experiments and clear scientific results about the existence of the interrelationship between body and mind, as well as the ability to exist after the body is destroyed. Of course, this is just to create more confidence for ordinary people, because for practitioners who have attained enlightenment, there is no need. After all, they

²⁴ Borjigin, J., et al. "Evidence of Conscious-Like Activity in the Dying Brain." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2023. available at: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/05/230501163628.htm>.

realize it themselves during the process of attaining enlightenment by practicing meditation.

VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING INNER PEACE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of our lives. However, excessive social media use might harm our mental health. Constant exposure to highly produced and frequently inaccurate portrayals of other people's lives can lead to feelings of stress, inadequacy, and anxiety. Furthermore, the addictive nature of social media may contribute to low self-esteem and increased loneliness. One thing we cannot dispute is that social media can quickly become a breeding ground for negativity and poison. It is critical to establish time limits for social media use and to consider what type of content is appropriate to follow because it can have a significant impact on our internal tranquillity. The way we choose social media and handle everything nicely on social media will reflect who we are. As a result, we must make intelligent decisions about where we spend our time to keep our peace of mind from being overwhelmed by the negative consequences. Seeking and cultivating a peaceful mind has become more important than ever. The continual barrage of information, the responsibilities of work and personal life, and the never-ending chase of achievement may all make us feel overwhelmed, worried, and detached from ourselves. However, in the middle of this chaos, it is critical to prioritize and seek inner calm, as it not only enhances our mental and emotional well-being but also improves our physical health and interpersonal connections. The greatest way to obtain inner peace is to take a holistic approach that incorporates multiple disciplines and perspectives. By incorporating mindfulness, self-reflection, appreciation, and meaningful connections into our daily lives, we provide a solid basis for inner calm. This multimodal approach enables us to address several areas of our well-being while also establishing a long-term sense of inner serenity that can endure modern-day obstacles. We can give an image in which two people are faced with a high-pressure work environment. One individual is continually overwhelmed, agitated, and unable to keep up with the demands, whereas the other has developed inner serenity via mindfulness and self-reflection. The latter person can address issues with a calm and concentrated perspective, resulting in better decisions and a healthier work-life balance. This example demonstrates how achieving inner peace can improve our general well-being and allow us to negotiate the challenges of today's world more easily and resiliently. For that reason, the cultivation of inner peace is very important, especially in the digital age. Mindfulness, self-reflection, appreciation, and meaningful connections can help us achieve inner serenity, clarity, and fulfilment. Remember that peace is every step, we can cultivate and nourish peace of mind right now and here. By doing so, it means we are touching the wonderful present moment.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In short, there is a close relationship between the mind and the brain. This

proves that inner peace is within our reach to build world peace. The more we study how the mind and brain intertwine, the more we find how well it maps with *Dharma*, then we can understand the origin of suffering as well as find out the way leading to the cessation of suffering because the purpose of Buddhism is to end suffering and attain happiness in the present moment. We do not need an EEG or MRI to observe our mind, although it is also a useful method of modern science to understand why the traditional method works. With meditation, we can sit with ourselves and experience what is happening in our mind, then we can use the mind to change the brain, then pervade peaceful energy to surround the environment. We know that, in our brain, neurons wire and fire together, so learning how to use our mind to shape the wiring of our brain is a profound way to support ourselves on the path of awakening. The mind is not independent of the brain. As our brain changes, our mind changes. Similarly, as our mind changes, our brain changes, even the brain changes from moment to moment to support the movement of information. So, why do not use our minds to change our brains to benefit our lives as well as bring happiness to other beings whose lives we touch? Moreover, Buddhism advocates that the body and mind work closely together when people are alive. Through their actions of body and mind, the karma created will lead people to be reborn and receive *karmic* results in the future. Therefore, inevitably, in Buddhism, there is the existence of consciousness, specifically store consciousness or *ālaya* consciousness to maintain karma from one life to the next. Science has so far only discovered a few preliminary clues about the existence of the interrelationship between body and mind, as well as the ability to exist after the body is destroyed. We can conclude that there is no existence of the body, including the brain, as a mere mass of matter, nor does the mind or consciousness exist as a separate entity apart from the body. That is the reason why there is no issue of monism or duality of mind-matter here. A person cannot be identified with the mind alone or with the brain or the rest of the body. In other words, no individual can be found under analysis apart from the body and mind either. Moreover, none of us exists as independent things, we do exist in interdependence and interrelationship with each other. The Buddhist thought on the interrelationship between body and mind contributes to the promotion of ethical values in cognitive science research toward a sustainably developed society. In the field of scientific research, many timeless intellectuals, such as Albert Einstein, the most brilliant scientist of the 20th century, were curious and devoted themselves to studying Buddhist teachings. The more he studied, the more surprised he was because the Buddha's teachings were not only accurate but also far beyond the limited knowledge of science. And he, the most prestigious representative of the scientific community, had to admit that: "If there is any religion that meets the needs of modern science, it is Buddhism. Buddhism does not need to revise its views to update with new scientific discoveries. Buddhism does not need to abandon its views to follow the trend of science, because Buddhism includes science as well as goes beyond science." So, what is the part that Einstein said is beyond science? The Buddha knows all the truths and laws of this universe, but he only selectively teaches things that

bring joy and happiness to sentient beings. Even redundant knowledge, he also cuts out to avoid distracting disciples, wasting time without gaining significant benefits. In the *Simsapa Leaves Sutta*,²⁵ the Buddha taught that: “In the same way, monks, those things that I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than what I have taught]. And why haven’t I taught them? Because they are not connected with the goal, do not relate to the rudiments of the holy life, and do not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calm, direct knowledge, self-awakening, and unbinding. That is why I have not taught them.”²⁶ Therefore, if science aspires to know the truths of nature to exploit it for the conquest of nature and production of material goods, Buddhism aspires to know the truth of nature to relieve the suffering that arises from both internal and external conditions and attain the perfect freedom even from suffering, to remedy all problems and pursue personal development. If the field of the Buddhist search for knowledge is the human being, that of science is the external world. Buddhism believes that human beings are the highest evolution of nature. The human organism contains nature on both the physical and mental planes, which we call body and mind. The body is made up of the elements and connected to the external physical world, but the physical world does not include the world of values or the mind. Through studying, mankind can know the truth of all aspects of nature, both the physical and the abstract. If comparing Buddhism to science, we see that Buddhism puts mankind at the center with its aim to understand and develop the human being because according to the Buddhist perspective, the mind is the creator of sickness and health as well as all of our problems;²⁷ whereas science is interested in only the material life of human beings and seeks to know the truths of nature outside of them but does not know the nature of the human being as well as does not recognize the factor of mind, consciousness, or spirit. If Buddhism is man-centered, science is self-centered, although both are anthropocentric. While science is outward-looking, Buddhism is inward-looking, using contemplation as its approach. While science is concerned with the objective world, Buddhism primarily concerns the self. Instead of breaking reality into its distinct parts, as is the reductionist approach of science, Buddhism approaches things as a whole, aiming to understand them as a whole. Buddhism does not need measuring instruments, nor does it rely on any of the sophisticated means of observation that are the backbone of empirical science. It is qualitative rather than quantitative. To achieve a sustainably developed society with long-term healing, it is vital to cure not only the current ailment with medicines and other forms of treatment but also the underlying cause of the disease, which stems from the mind. If we do not cure or purify our minds, illness, and issues will reoccur. Therefore, the notion of inner peace plays an important role in a peaceful and harmonious world where there is no war, nonviolence, and no conflict.

²⁵ *Simsapa Leaves Sutta*, vol. V, (1888): p.437 – 438.

²⁶ SN. 56.31.

²⁷ Singh (2018): p.152.

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MINDFULNESS, THE METHOD FOR ESTABLISHING PEACE IN THE GLOBAL

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Abstract:

This study explores the fundamental principles and applications of a specific Buddhist philosophical doctrine within contemporary ethical and social contexts. By analyzing classical texts and modern interpretations, the research highlights the doctrine's relevance in addressing contemporary moral dilemmas. The study employs a multidisciplinary approach, integrating historical, philosophical, and comparative methods to offer a comprehensive perspective.

Through a detailed examination of primary sources, the research elucidates key doctrinal concepts and their implications for ethical decision-making. The study also engages with contemporary scholarly debates, demonstrating the doctrine's adaptability to modern societal issues. Findings reveal that the doctrine provides a nuanced ethical framework that balances individual and collective well-being, offering insights into conflict resolution, personal development, and social harmony.

Furthermore, the research underscores the doctrine's practical applications in fields such as education, psychology, and interfaith dialogue. By bridging the gap between traditional Buddhist thought and contemporary ethical challenges, this study contributes to both academic discourse and practical ethical decision-making. Ultimately, it reaffirms the doctrine's enduring significance in fostering a compassionate and harmonious society.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, human, social issue, practice, benefit, and peace.*

I. MODERN HUMAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES

The social situations from the past to the present that is undergoing great changes with so many events happening quickly, which both provide people with opportunities and conditions to develop and light up the future, as well as humans

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must face difficulties, challenges, and many worries and insecurities. People have always been bound by afflictions, sufferings, because human is to try attachment to sensual pleasures and lacks a deep understanding of all things and phenomena as they are, which leads to consequences that not only affect their development but also make the society suffer from crises and conflicts in many aspects such as economic and financial crisis, education decline, human morals deteriorate, security is in unsafe, health care is in fluctuation. Therefore, society becomes unjust, unsafe, and individuals live unhappily and not at peace.

The Buddha taught the following about the allure of sensuality, its dangers, as well as how to eliminate it:

“Now, what, monks, is the allure of sensuality? These five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye — agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Sounds cognizable via the ear... Aromas cognizable via the nose... Flavors cognizable via the tongue... Tactile sensations cognizable via the body — agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Now, whatever pleasure or joy arises in dependence on these five strands of sensuality that is the allure of sensuality”.

“And what is the drawback of sensuality? There is the case where, on account of the occupation by which a clansman makes a living — whether checking or accounting or calculating or plowing or trading or cattle-tending or archery or as a king’s man, or whatever the occupation maybe — he faces cold, he faces heat, being harassed by mosquitoes & flies, wind & sun & creeping things, dying from hunger & thirst. When striving to follow lust to attain possessions or the things they desire, but that doesn’t arise, he laments, sorrows disappoints. However, when he has obtained property and material things, he is afraid of losing, being robbed, etc., leading them to be afraid, insecure, suffering”.

Again, it is with sensuality for the reason, sensuality for the source, sensuality for the cause, the reason being simply sensuality, that kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, Brahmans with Brahmans, householders with householders, mother with child, child with mother, father with child, child with father, brother with brother, sister with sister, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. And then in their quarrels, brawls, & disputes, they attack one another with fists or with clods or with sticks or with knives, so that they incur death or deadly pain. Now this drawback too in the case of sensuality, this mass of stress visible here & now, has sensuality for its reason, sensuality for its source, sensuality for its cause, the reason being simply sensuality. And what, monks, is the escape from sensuality? The subduing of desire-passion for sensuality, the abandoning of desire-passion for sensuality: That is the escape from sensuality.¹

¹ MN 13.

The reality of life has reflected for us the seeing problems for individuals and society. The fundamental cause is that each individual does not know how to care for their inner self, does not know how to recognize the problems clearly, and lives in a hurry and hastily. Everything that exists in this world is governed by the three characteristics of impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering (*dukkhā*), and non-self (*ānatta*).

Due to ignorance, human beings do not realize the three characteristics of all things, thereby making greedy of mind have a great opportunity to develop and resulting in self-worship and a selfish life. When people's lives are dominated by material and riches, societal ills appear, life becomes unbalanced, and people are forced to endure perpetual pain. Their inner beings are damaged, and they live unpleasant and unhappy lives. Creating a life of a society that is insecure, agitated, and underdeveloped.

Understanding the nature of this existence full of suffering, fragile happiness, everything is sensitive to changes, impermanence, practicing mindfulness, and deeply contemplating this life is important for a practitioner or disciple of the Buddha. Then, humans return to practice meditation and cultivate the teachings. It will help purify the mind, develop oneself, free oneself from suffering, worry, eradicate defilements, and finally establish peace and happiness in the mundane life.

II. THE CAUSES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY'S UNBALANCED MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

Many big problems make us think: the moral crisis of people in society, problems that lead to suffering such as war with nuclear weapons; resource depletion, persistent poverty that puts millions of people in poverty, living at the bottom of misery to economic crises; unstable political situation is spreading along with human trafficking and cross-border crime; the atmosphere of hatred along with the sound of bombs falling, bullets exploding is still causing tragic death scenes in many places... So, the question for researchers of social issues is: What causes suffering?

2.1. The internal causes

In the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, *taṇhā* was the sole cause of suffering, and later through the theory of causal condition (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), ignorance (*avijjā*) was introduced as the cause functioning, cause functioning together with other conditions to suffering.

“And what, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? It is this craving that leads to renewed existence (*ponobhavika*), accompanied by delight and lust (*nandirāga sahaḡatā*), seeking delight here and there (*tathra tathrābhinandini*); that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering.”²

² SN. 56.13: “*Katamaṇca , bhikkhave, dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ? Yāyaṃ taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandirāgasahaḡatā tatrataṭṭhābhinandinī , seyyathidaṃ – kāmataṇhā, bhav-*

The Buddha clearly pointed out that the cause of sentient beings' suffering is craving and ignorance. In the mind of every human being, there are always hidden afflictions, substances containing craving, delusion, so they suffer from the cycle of birth and death. Because sentient beings do not see so, they are always clinging to temporary things, beyond thinking that it is something that will belong to me and my property, but when it disappears, they feel sadness and worry. The main cause is desire, which is without limits like the bottomless ocean. People suffer because of the desire to live not to die, the desire for wealth so they try to practice immortality, the desire to possess, desire for material and spiritual pleasures, and desire emotions. In short, people want all kinds of things even if they do not fall into sin. Greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, doubt, and ill view are the causes leading to suffering in human life. What is the desire (*taṇhā*)? And what is ignorance (*avijjā*)?.

Craving (P. *Taṇhā*) is an important thing to understand, is liking, craving, craving through the contact between the senses and the objects, generating sensations and clinging to them. Craving has absolutely no beginning and no ending; infinite, but it is the most obvious part of the Twelve Causes and Conditions, so the Blessed One emphasizes craving and the cessation of craving in the process of practice. It is not the starting cause but directly and specifically affects the beginning and the ending of a new life. Craving has six clinging places: craving for form, craving for sound, craving for scent, craving for taste, craving for touch, and craving for Dhamma. It is because the nature of the mind is craving and delusion that craving never stops, forever causing sentient beings to drift and sink in samsara. Because of craving, there is anxiety; because of craving, there is fear. Those who are completely free from craving are no longer anxious and have less fear. There are three kinds of craving, as follows:

- (1) Craving for sense pleasures is the desire for the enjoyment of the five sense objects.
- (2) Craving for existence is the desire for continued existence or eternal life, referring, in particular, to living in those higher worlds called fine-material and immaterial existences (*rūpa* and *arūpa-bhava*). It is closely connected with the so-called "eternity-belief" (*sassata-ditthi*).
- (3) Craving for non-existence is the outcome of the "belief in annihilation" (*uccheda-ditthi*). This is the delusive materialistic notion of a more or less real Ego that is annihilated at death.

Kāma-taṇhā is very easy to understand. This kind of desire is wanting to sense pleasures through the body or the other senses and always seeking things to excite or please your senses – that is *kāma-taṇhā*. You can contemplate: what is it like when you have the desire for pleasure? For example, when you are eating, if you are hungry and the food tastes delicious, you can be aware of wanting to take another bite. Notice that feeling when you are tasting something pleasant – and notice how you want more of it. Don't just believe

this; try it out. Don't think you know it because it has been that way in the past. Try it out when you eat. Taste something delicious and see what happens: a desire for more arises. That is *kāma-taṇhā*. We also contemplate the feeling of wanting to become something. If there is ignorance, then when we are not seeking something delicious to eat or some beautiful music to listen to, we can be caught in a realm of ambition and attainment, the desire to become. We get caught in that movement of striving to become happy, seeking to become wealthy; or we might attempt to make our life feel important by endeavoring to make the world right. So note this sense of wanting to become something other than what you are right now. Listen to the *bhāva-taṇhā* of your life: "I want to practice meditation so I can become free from my pain. I want to become enlightened. I want to become a monk or a nun. I want to become enlightened as a layperson. I want to have a wife and children and a profession. I want to enjoy the sense-world without having to give up anything and become an enlightened arahant too". When we get disillusioned with trying to become something, then there is the desire to get rid of things. So we contemplate *vibhava-taṇhā*, the desire to get rid of: "I want to get rid of my suffering. I want to get rid of my anger. I've got this anger, and I want to get rid of it. I want to get rid of jealousy, fear, and anxiety." Notice this as a reflection on *vibhava-taṇhā*. We're contemplating that within ourselves which wants to get rid of things; we are not trying to get rid of *vibhava-taṇhā*. We're not taking a stand against the desire to get rid of things, nor are we encouraging that desire. We can see from this train of thought that becoming and getting rid of are very much associated.

"Craving" actually stands for "*lobha*", a mental factor that associates with greed-rooted consciousness. *Lobha* has the characteristics of craving and attachment. It will never give up these characteristics. It will always crave sensuous objects or *jhāna*-happiness. It will never give up this intrinsic nature of craving however much one may get. Even the whole wealth on earth cannot satisfy the desire of *lobha*. It is always on the lookout for something new. So one can never be happy by trying to gratify one's desires. It is like looking for water in a mirage or like looking for gold at the bottom of the rainbow. Material happiness is merely the gratification of strong desires. No sooner is the desired thing gained than it begins to be scorned. Insatiate (never satisfied) are all desires. Now it is suffering to work hard to get money and to exert effort to gratify one's desires. And when one's desires are not gratified, one gets disappointed. This is, again, suffering. When one gets the things one desires, one is attached to these things and plagued with worry for their safety. So, one has to go through many troubles to guard them, and when they are lost, one feels very sad. The greater the attachment to the things or loved ones, the greater the grief or despair when one loses them.

Craving or attachment is truly the cause of suffering. Now, *lobha* is called *taṇhā* in the sense of desire or attachment, and *rāga* in the sense of craving or taint or defilement. The Buddha said: "*Nathi rāga samo aggi*"³ (There is no fire

³ *Dhp* 202: There is no fire like passion; there is no evil like hatred; there is no ill like (the

as hot as *rāga*).

Again, *lobha* is a defilement (*kilesā*), and it works in unison with other defilements such as ignorance (*moha*), wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), conceit (*māna*), moral shamelessness (*ahirika*), moral fearlessness (*anottappa*), and restlessness (*uddhacca*). So the Buddha also referred to all defilements (*kilesās*) as the causes of suffering.

Again, when one perceives a visible object, a sound, odor, taste, bodily impression, or a mental object, one experiences a pleasant feeling if the sense object is desirable and an unpleasant feeling if the sense object is not desirable. Whatever kind of feeling (*vedanā*) one experiences, if one approves of it, cherishes it, and attaches to it, lust or *tanhā* springs up. When *tanhā* gains in strength, it becomes strong clinging (*upādāna*). Because of this strong clinging, one performs new actions to enjoy the cherished feeling again. Thus, new *Kamma* (*Kamma-bhava*) arises, and when this *Kamma* bears result in the next existence with the support of ignorance, craving, and clinging (*avijjā, tanhā, upadāna*), birth (*jāti*) arises. Dependent on birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair arise. Thus arises the whole mass of suffering.⁴

The formula of the Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppada*)⁵ of which only some of the twelve links have been mentioned above may be regarded as the detailed explanation of the second Noble Truth. In other words, all the causes that are involved in Dependent Origination can be taken as the causes of suffering.

2.2. The external causes

Craving and ignorance are the two main causes; it affects everyone's inner self; when it is dictated by it, people often do unwholesome things, leading to moral decadence; it affects thinking; bad thinking, not seeing all things clearly, and it leads to a decline in the economy and an unstable political situation. Furthermore, there are external factors that influence the contaminated mind; when an individual is badly influenced, it results in a terrible and underdeveloped society. Climate, living environment, wars and conflicts, horrible conditions, etc, these external causes also impact the inner self of each being, resulting in the formation of bad qualities. We can perceive a link between internal and external causes that have tainted the minds of sentient beings and have an impact on society's growth in various aspects such as economy, education, medicine, politics, religion, ethics, and so on.

These are the causes that contribute to the impurification of the mind, resulting in an imbalance in both the material and spiritual in mundane life.

burden of) *khandhas*; there is no bliss that surpasses the Perfect Peace (i.e., *Nibbāna*)

⁴ *MI*. 38

⁵ *Paṭiccasamuppada* is Pali language, a combination of three words, i.e., *Paticca* means "because of" and "dependent upon". *Sam* means well, *Uppada* means arising of effect through cause, so dependent on cause there arises effect, hence it is known in English as Law of Dependent Origination or Cycle of Rebirth.

III. MINDFULNESS, THE METHOD FOR ESTABLISHING PEACE AND AWAKENING LIFE

3.1. Definition

Mindfulness (*Sati*) is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

Mindfulness (*Sati*) is the basis for all of the other components on the path. According to the Four Noble Truths, unless one is mindful, there cannot be a right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, or concentration. The Buddha used meditation as a practice to develop mindfulness, thereby allowing progress on the path and eventually attaining enlightenment.

Mindfulness is all about the presence of the mind or paying attention. But it's a particular kind of attention. We are forever paying attention to something. Mindfulness involves paying attention to what is occurring in the present moment. Paying attention to memories, daydreams, ruminations about the past, thoughts about the future, planning, problem-solving, dreaming, visualizing, etc., is not mindfulness. Rather, it is paying attention to the sensations from inside the body and from the outside environment, to the momentary thoughts floating through the mind, and to momentary awareness itself.

In addition, it is intentionally paying attention, doing so on purpose, and witnessing what is transpiring in the present moment without judgment, without consideration of it being good or bad, right or wrong, pleasant or unpleasant, or smart or stupid, rather, simply letting things be as they are. It can be thought of as thoughtless awareness, pure awareness of now, or bare attention, without reference to the past or the future, or for that matter without any processing of the information whatsoever.

Mindfulness is one of the most important Buddhist practice methods. It is to focus only on an object in the present moment, to pay attention, to concentrate on it, to help the practitioner stay in the present, to help purification of the mind, removing taints or defilements, freedom from all attachments, and achieving truth, happiness, and enlightenment.

3.2. The function of mindfulness

Mindfulness is a very important factor; it is the foundation for all of the parts of the Eightfold Path. Without it, it is difficult to have the right view and the right thoughts. Mindfulness has an equally significant part in the right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right concentration. The most significant mental aspects in the practice are mindfulness and awareness. Here, the meditator has clearly seen that, on the path of development of the Noble Truth or on the path of meditation. Mindfulness is the most significant factor; it is there from the first step to the last in the cultivating path to leading liberation and enlightenment.

When we lose mindfulness, it means we are not present, the other things are also absent. When we are present, all these things are present. So our presence gives presence to the whole universe, to life, and all the magical entities around

us. Mindfulness is the energy that is able to recognize what is happening in and around us. When that energy is present, our body and mind are connected, and we are truly present in the present moment to live deeply every day. Our mind is not carried away by regrets about the past or worries about the future. We are in touch with the mysteries of life, capable of nourishing and healing us. We also have the energy of Mindfulness to recognize, embrace, and transform our suffering. We practice generating the energy of Mindfulness while breathing, walking, standing, lying, sitting, and working. Mindfulness affirms the presence of objects, people, and other things outside of us. These are things like cotton, plum trees, birds, the sky, father, mother, teacher, aunt, brother, sister, friend, neighbor, etc. If we are not present, those objects are also absent. Life is only present when we contact it in Mindfulness, so it can be said that Mindfulness makes life present in the present moment.

Mindfulness helps us to look deeply into the nature of things and phenomena. In the process of practice, mindfulness will help our mind become more focused, not wandering about impurities things or worldly objects, helping the practitioner to concentrate the mind, not to lose mindfulness, to bring the practitioner back to a single object. By contemplating deeply and diligently on that object, the meditator will see that all things and phenomena happen according to their laws of being; everything is governed by impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*).

According to the *Mahasatipatthana sutta*, the Buddha said:

This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of *Nibbāna*, namely, the four foundations of mindfulness. What are the four?

Herein (in this teaching) a monk lives contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating feelings in feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief.⁶

The arising of suffering and the absence of freedom and happiness is due to humans clinging to the three roots of craving, hatred, and delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*). From that, they lose mindfulness, to do many unwholesome, evils, it makes unpurification of the inner mind, affects to people and things in around. In other words, it is because of the lack of mindfulness, which makes the individual not good and makes the society confused, insecure, and in crisis in mundane life.

⁶ D. I. 22.

Mindfulness is called a controlling faculty (*indriya*) and a spiritual power (*bala*) and is also the first of the seven factors of enlightenment (*satta bojjhanga*). Right Mindfulness (*samma-sati*) has to be present in every skillful or karmically wholesome thought moment (*kusalacitta*). It is the basis of all earnest endeavor (*appamada*) for liberation and maintains in us the sense of urgency to strive for enlightenment or Nibbāna.

Mindfulness of breathing takes the highest place among the various subjects of Buddhist meditation. It has been recommended and praised by the Enlightened One thus: "This concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and practiced much, is both peaceful and sublime, it is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise". Though of such a high order, the initial stages of this meditation are well within the reach of a beginner though he is only a lay student of the *Buddha-Dhamma*. Both in the Discourse here translated and in the 118th Discourse of the same Collection (the *Majjhima-nikāya*), which specifically deals with that meditation, the initial instructions for the practice are clearly laid down:

Herein, monks, a monk, having gone to the forest or the root of a tree or to an empty place, sits down with his legs crossed, keeps his body erect and his mindfulness alert. Ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing in a long breath"; breathing out a long breath, he knows, "I am breathing out a long breath." Breathing in a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing in a short breath"; breathing out a short breath, he knows, "I am breathing out a short breath." "Experiencing the whole (breath) body, I shall breathe in," thus he trains himself. "Experiencing the whole (breath-) body, I shall breathe out," thus he trains himself. "Calming the activity of the (breath-) body, I shall breathe in," thus he trains himself. "Calming the activity of the (breath) body, I shall breathe out," thus he trains himself.⁷

When practicing mindfulness of breathing, attention should be focused at the tip of the nose or the point of the upper lip immediately below where the current of air can be felt. The meditator's attention should not leave this "focusing point" from where the in-coming and out-going breaths can be easily felt and observed. The meditator may become aware of the breath's route through the body, but he should not pay attention to it. At the beginning of the practice, the meditator should concentrate only on the in-breaths and out-breaths and should not fall into any reflections about them. It is only at a later stage that he should apply himself to the arousing of knowledge and other states connected with the concentration.

Therefore, it can be seen that for a person who practices mindfulness on the four foundations, it is easy to observe all things as what they are, with no clinging, no anger, free from sorrow and pain, worry, or doubt about oneself and the current social situation. It helps people be more understanding in life, live more slowly, freely, and happily to eliminate defilements, contributing to

⁷ M. I. 118.

the development of society more civilized society, economic changes, and political peace and creating a standard and fair life, thereby making this world a better place, bringing happiness and peace.

It has been said by the Buddha: “Mindfulness of breathing, developed and repeatedly practiced, is of great fruit, of great advantage, for it fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness; the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and repeatedly practiced, fulfill the seven enlightenment factors; the seven enlightenment factors, developed and repeatedly practiced, fulfill clear-vision and deliverance.”⁸ Clear vision and deliverance, or direct knowledge and the bliss of liberation, are the highest fruit of the application of mindfulness.

When one understands these concepts, the meaning of these definitions also functions as Mindfulness Meditation. Absolutely, one will easily go into practice them in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism. And towards enlightenment and attaining the path (*Magga*) and fruit (*Phala*). More than that, the process of practicing mindfulness meditation to solve the problems in society and aim to establish global peace nowadays.

3.3. The benefits of practicing mindfulness

Usually, we let our mind roam, chasing after form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and *dhamma*, we don't have mindfulness. When we sit back and chant, recite the Buddha's name, meditate, etc., we return to mindfulness. We don't let the mind wander around the world, don't let the mind get carried away and bound by conditions, and we don't let the mind be agitated by thoughts, but let the mind rest in wholesome dhammas. Pure, clear mind that is living in mindfulness. However, if chanting sutras and reciting the Buddha's name but letting the mind wander, the body in one place, but the mind one-sided, dependent, giving rise to afflictions and delusions, is not living in mindfulness.

Mindful people know clearly what they are thinking and doing, whether their mind has afflictions, delusions or not. Happiness and suffering (unwholesome actions). Mindful people are aware of the presence of themselves and those around them in each present moment, clearly aware of what is happening, aware of the arising and passing away, the operation of dhammas. People without mindfulness often live in illusions, ambiguity, being attracted by worldly conditions, chasing after form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dhammas, leading to creating akusala Kamma and finally receiving suffering.

When our mind is not chased after worldly conditions, is not influenced by external conditions, is no longer agitated inside, clings to the past, and thinks about the future, then there is no existence of worry, fear, insecurity, or pain. When there is no mindfulness or the power of mindfulness is too weak, people are easily attracted to evil and unwholesome *dhammas* (*dhammas* that lead to suffering and unhappiness). In everyday life, those dhammas are theft, adultery, alcohol, gambling, addiction, gambling, drug addiction, greed for money, beauty, fame, jealousy, and jealousy anger. At that time, we were completely

⁸ M. I. 118.

invaded both physically and mentally. We lost a lot of joy, lost freedom, peace of mind, and couldn't find lasting true happiness in life. Mindfulness is the art of being positive so that our lives have real value and meaning and so that our lives are truly happy.

A meditator or anyone who practices mindfulness meditation in life, will attain benefits, that will help them to gain concentration, to truly remember, to be present in every moment, to appreciate the present life, to develop loving-kindness, compassion, to be liberated from afflictions and suffering, to attain peace and happiness by not chasing what is vague in the future and not clinging to past things.

Thanks to mindfulness to help us pure the mind focus on developing good things, making our personal lives happy and peaceful, thereby creating a moral society, safe and establishing harmony Global average in this society. Moreover, mindfulness helps to purify the mind, leading to achieving happiness, *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*.

In terms of economic aspect: If humans know the application of mindfulness meditation into economic development, we will try to focus on the right things, seeing appropriate issues, clearly seeing and giving strategies ddevelopment for businesses, companies, or business individuals, efforts to apply mindfulness will help them have a spirit of smart, intellectual, deep reflection of life and what is happening in their lives. Having mindfulness, people will always respect each other, creating a solidarity strength, making the suitable methods to face disadvantages during the business. Each person contributed to a stronger corporation, the company in the global economic market.

In terms of education: the school in general or each teacher and students in particular, if there is an effort and concentration in teaching will create a tremendous motivation for all students to acquire ideas and learn. Also if you are mindful in education, you will always respect the opinions and contributions of students, reflect those things if right, so learn from each other, together to build a firm education. From that, promoting good things for education.

In terms of the medical aspect, A doctor or nurse who takes care of patients without concentration or lack of mindfulness will cause extremely serious consequences, can take away human life. Therefore, doctors always practice mindfulness to enhance concentration, calm life to make patient treatment solutions when they meet nearly dangers. Therefore, mindfulness helps them raise awareness and responsibility for human health and life industries. Helping the medical growth more and more professional.

In Politics: State heads or heads of state applications Mindfulness to develop reasonable policies, providing peace protection strategies for the country, consciousness and good responsibility in Bao Practice peace for the country. If the consciousness will easily create hatred in humans of mind, bring to war conflicts. Therefore, mindfulness is very important in building peace not only for the country but also influences the world.

Mindfulness meditation creates great power to prevent unwholesome things from arising in the mind. Besides that, when these factors are combined with mindfulness, it helps meditators to cut off defilements (*Kilesā*) and hindrances. In cultivating, Mindfulness meditation will not only lead to inner peace, social harmony but also to concentration, health, stress, or worry reduction. In addition, its other significant factors include ethics, education, psychotherapy, etc. And in solution to mental illness like hate, depression, sloth and torpor, restlessness, etc., and other social conflicts problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

People in today's modern society no longer live simply as they did in the past because mechanical and electronic engineering civilization has attracted people to join and race against time. Everything has to be quick. It has to be quick. Nobody is waiting for anyone in this fast-paced world. That is why the human mind never stops thinking, sometimes having unwholesome and negative thoughts, and always conspiring to calculate in any way that will benefit them. It's bad for others. This leads to societal hatred, struggles, and finally getting hurt, suffering, afflictions pile up, life is severely harmed, living is unhappy, unbalanced. Everyone wants to work to create their lives better and happier lives. In fact, however, the body and mind are under extreme stress and crisis in the end. Mindfulness is an essential component for keeping the mind focused, paying attention to what is happening, accepting it, and making an effort to overcome afflictions and achieve happiness, peace, and tranquility.

Furthermore, practicing mindfulness meditation will help us to remember this life carefully and deeply, not to chase after the five desires, and not to let our mind wander about vague things so that we can protect ourselves and our lives. Keep yourself from being manipulated by outside forces.

Mindfulness teaches us to appreciate what has been and is happening in each present moment, to recognize the nature of existence, and to reflect on the inner and outer arising of the body. It's a true reflection of the present.

Mindfulness helps in the recognition of life's characteristics such as impermanence, suffering, and non-self. From there, individuals will be able to give up clinging, free from attachment and greed.

Mindfulness assists each individual in getting control of oneself. Only when our lives are smooth, stable, healthy, and happy will we be able to fulfill our responsibilities to family and society.

If you know how to apply mindfulness or considerate attention and clear recognition to professions and fields in society, you will get many creative ideas and have a direction for suitable development, as well as making social life peaceful and happy.

When you or society constantly practice applying mindfulness to your life, there will be more opportunities for healing wounds, preventing evil from occurring, and creating benefit for purification of mind, eradicating suffering and afflictions, achieving enlightenment, liberation, and establishing well-being, happiness, and peace in the mundane.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: A CONSTRUCTIVISM ANALYSIS TOWARD INTERNALIZED INNER PEACE AND RATIONALITY IN THE POSTMODERN ERA THROUGH RECITING *PARITTA*

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Abstract:

Postmodern society needs to consume religious rituals, including *paritta* recitation. Rituals have a therapeutic function that can strengthen individuals' bonds with the community, increase self-esteem, and provide a sense of security against anxiety. However, the therapeutic function only works when the ritual is able to help individuals manage disturbing emotions. It is necessary to examine how the ritual of reciting *paritta* can bring rationality in the postmodern era. The research method uses Library Research with the Content Analysis technique. The results showed that postmodern society has a tendency to live in a hyperreality-driven state of "craziness" - desire, speed, fantasy-hallucination, monetary obsession, lifestyle fixation, and spectacle - often leading to irrational behavior. *Paritta* recitations are found to function as petitionary prayers, prayers of resignation, and prayers of self-reflection (*anussati*), guiding individuals toward rationality by internalizing the essence of *paritta* itself. These three dimensions also have a therapeutic function that fosters peace, rationality, and loving-kindness, encouraging the aspiration: "May all beings be happy."

Keywords: *paritta, postmodern, rationality, infatuations, ritual.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern society has always criticized and rejected traditional ideas as

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outdated and belonging to an old culture.¹ Even in the modern theory of Max Weber (1864 – 1920), the idea of the rationality of traditional wisdom (traditional rationality) is considered irrational. Meanwhile, modern society regards value-oriented rationality and instrumental rationality (Instrumental Rationality - where humans are able to find tools to achieve their goals) as rational in the modern era.² Similarly, in this case, religious beliefs are often perceived as governing only the social life of the traditional era. Their role is seen as increasingly diminishing and being replaced by social institutions with a scientific approach in the modern era.³ The real problem of modernity is the problem of belief, where meaning systems in secularized modern societies prove to be an illusory solution to social crises when people's anchorage in religion is severed. Only a religious revival is capable of ensuring the sustainability of future generations, generating images of the cosmic order, upholding the value of religious humanism, and addressing concerns about existential dangers.⁴ In short, there are claims that modern societies, which tend to embrace secularity and are oriented toward science, are gradually distancing themselves from religion and spiritual wisdom. But will religion and spiritual wisdom truly be abandoned? Modern society still seems to struggle in defining the purpose of life through the lens of scientific rationality. Despite their pride in science, they fail to explain what the ultimate goal of life is.⁵ In their daily lives, modern individuals are often entangled in existential dilemmas, especially during times of illness. This is what postmodern society has come to realize. Postmodernity is not the opposite of modernity; rather, it exists outside of modernity, with all its critical reviews and radical qualities.⁶ Postmodern societies are not like modern societies, which are anti-history - rejecting history as conservative and outdated. Instead, postmodern societies are open to traditional wisdom, including religious wisdom. At the same time, they are oriented toward consumer lifestyles, where mass consumers dominate taste and style.⁷ One of the things they consume is religious rituals. Religious rituals fulfill at least the main characteristics of consumer culture, particularly through the availability of various commodities, goods, and experiences that the general public consumes, plans for, sustains, and aspires to.⁸ This indicates that postmodern society has a demand for religious rituals, including *paritta* recitation. Moreover, rituals have a therapeutic function. Most rituals possess the ability to strengthen individuals' bonds with their community, enhance participants' self-esteem, and provide a sense of security against life's anxieties and fears. However, the therapeutic function can only be effective when rituals

¹ Martono (2018): p. 97.

² *Ibid*, p. 54 - 56.

³ *Ibid*, p. 323 - 324.

⁴ Daniel Bell (1976): 28 in Featherstone (2008): 278.

⁵ Martono (2018): 324 - 326.

⁶ Turner (2008): 19 - 20.

⁷ Jameson (1984): 56; Kellner (1983): 90; Lash & Urry (1987): 5, in *Ibid*: p. 7.

⁸ Adorno (1967): 95; Jameson (1979): 67; Leiss (1983): 97.

help individuals manage disturbing emotions.⁹ Building on this premise, the research formulates the question: “How can reciting the *paritta* bring internalized rationality and cultivate inner peace in the postmodern era?” This study aims to answer that question.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method employed is library research, conducted using literature such as books, encyclopedias, journals, dictionaries, magazines, documents, library archive records, and similar sources.¹⁰ Strictly speaking, this type of research confines its activities to library collection materials only, without requiring field research.¹¹ In conducting this research, the researchers analyzed data based on literary sources, including books, journals, suttas, and Buddhist canons, to address the research question: “How can reciting the *paritta* bring internalized rationality and cultivate inner peace in the postmodern era?” The research was carried out in various libraries, including the National Library of Indonesia (Merdeka Selatan), South Jakarta City Library (Gandaria Tengah), the researcher’s library, and all libraries owned by the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government (accessible via the “*Jaklitera*” application). Digital data was obtained through internet browsing. Data collection techniques are documentation, reading semantically on key texts and symbolically on auxiliary texts, then recorded in quotations, paraphrases, and synoptics using auxiliary instruments in the form of the Mendeley application as a substitute for conventional data cards. The analysis technique used Fraenkel and Wallen’s Content Analysis (2007) as follows: determine the research objectives to be achieved, define important terms that must be explained in detail, specialize the unit to be analyzed, searching for relevant data, building rational constructions or conceptual relationships to explain how data relates to research objectives, planning the sampling of literature data. Finally, formulate category coding.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. The irrational phenomenon of postmodern society

Postmodern individuals critically reassess the rigid secularism of modernist thought, which often positioned religious traditions and spiritual practices as antithetical to rational inquiry. Unlike their modernist predecessors, who dismissed spirituality as an outdated vestige of pre-Enlightenment thinking, postmodern thinkers exhibit a more pluralistic engagement with religious teachings and spiritual wisdom. This shift ensures that religious rituals retain a role within postmodern society, albeit in an evolving and often contested form. However, a significant transformation has emerged: religious rituals are increasingly appropriated indiscriminately, detached from their doctrinal

⁹ Johnson, D. R., et al. (1995). The therapeutic use of ritual and ceremony in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 8(2), 283 – 298. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490080210>.

¹⁰ Nursapia (2014): 66.

¹¹ Zed (2004): 2.

foundations and ethical significance. This phenomenon has facilitated the rise of *neospiritualism*, characterized by the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment through eclectic, novel forms of practice that, once popularized, undergo formalization and subsequent commodification, thereby acquiring economic value.

A prominent manifestation of *neospiritualism* is the proliferation of commercialized rituals – where spiritual practices, once embedded within communal and ethical traditions, are repackaged as marketable commodities. This includes paid divination services, ritualized self-cleansing ceremonies, consecrated water, talismans, amulets, and an expanding array of mystic-paranormal artifacts, often legitimized by religious authorities or self-proclaimed spiritual leaders. These commodified rituals thrive in postmodern societies that prioritize pragmatism and immediacy over theological depth or doctrinal coherence. Their widespread appeal is rooted in the postmodern preference for accessible, results-oriented solutions – regardless of whether their efficacy can withstand empirical scrutiny.

Despite their foundation in supernatural experiences, these commodified rituals continue to attract substantial participation, even as their capacity to foster genuine spiritual awareness or wisdom remains limited. Rather than facilitating an experiential connection to religious teachings, the rise of *neospiritualism* further entangles society in irrational and unreflective consumption, driven by a blend of economic forces and supernatural sensationalism. In this context, religious practice risks becoming a transactional experience, catering to an audience that seeks existential reassurance rather than engaging in the transformative ethical and contemplative processes central to authentic religious traditions. The entrenchment of *neospiritualism* thus reflects a deeper paradox within postmodern spirituality – an era that simultaneously yearns for transcendence yet remains enmeshed in consumer-driven illusions that obscure the true essence of religious wisdom.

What causes this phenomenon? Why do postmodern people gravitate toward instant, pragmatic, yet irrational and valueless (banal) things? The world in the postmodern era is excessively dynamic and fast-changing due to the pressures of three major narratives – global capitalism, postmodernity, and cyberspace – which generate immense psychological, perceptual, social, moral, and spiritual strain.¹² Modern phenomena, such as the dominance of TikTok standards and economic instability, make it increasingly difficult for postmodern individuals to maintain their sanity and sustain rational thinking. These pressures, at the very least, condition people to experience a degeneration of critical thought, ultimately leading postmodern society to become trapped in a form of collective madness – an extreme state that shapes its collective mentality.¹³ (1) The madness of desire: The excitement, pleasure, fascination with everything that awakens desire and libido, along with the liberation of desire in postmodern society. (2) The madness of speed: Panic scenes and

¹² Piliang (2004): xix, p. 154.

¹³ Piliang (2017): 357 – 373.

hysteria as humans are controlled by “speed machines” (mobile phones, stock exchanges, spectacle images, tiktok standards, computers, business, fashion, FYP, various trends, etc.) which according to Anthony Giddens lead humans into a world of “Instantaneousness” and “temporality” to keep moving, running, changing, moving, transforming, towards hyper-productivity. (3) The madness of fantasy and hallucination: With the advent of cyberspace, traditional boundaries - such as speed, gravity, morality, identity, and the distinction between fantasy and reality - have dissolved. In cyberspace, anyone can become anyone, engaging in even the wildest fantasies they have never realized in the real world. These may include acting out pornographic scenes with their idealized celebrities, simulating robberies and hostage rescues, presenting themselves with a female avatar despite being male in reality, or even committing cybercrimes. (4) The madness of Monetary: Is the panic of chasing money that is endlessly spinning on a global scale, with little to no impact on the real sector. (5) The madness of Lifestyle: Is the panic of hyper-consumerism, the fear of being left behind by the latest trends in appearance styles and/or the latest products without regard to the function of the products one consumes, without being able to elevate one’s spiritual quality. What is pursued is sign value in the form of prestige and a sense of pride in being able to wear updated products. (6) The madness of Spectacle: Addiction to images and information that emerge from various social media and information at a very high speed, but are immanent and banality, without giving meaning to one’s life whether spiritual, cultural, or moral. Many philosophers do not define madness in this context merely as a brain malfunction that disrupts thought and behavior (*delirium*). Instead, they interpret it in broader terms: as the loss of reason (*insanity*, according to Fromm), the loss of healthy thought (*unreason*, per Foucault), seductive intoxication (*ecstasy*, as described by Jean Baudrillard), drunkenness (*intoxication*, per Nietzsche), and the liberation of desire’s flow (*schizophrenia*, as conceptualized by Deleuze and Guattari). Rather than being viewed as a negative pathology to be rejected, these forms of madness are increasingly regarded as a driving force or spirit behind the evolution of postmodern society and culture.¹⁴ As a result, the thinking ability of postmodern humans tends to revel in superficiality and banality, with little concern for transcendent foundations (*logos*, divinity).¹⁵ They lack the opportunity to pause, reflect, or draw lessons from the overwhelming flood of rapid and overlapping information. Consequently, their thinking becomes shallow and easily swayed by the relentless dynamics of change and speed. Therefore, reflection and contemplation have become rare and even costly. Consumed by the madness of desire, postmodern humans lose clarity about the purpose and meaning of their existence on earth, as they are immersed in an endless stream of ever-regenerating images.¹⁶ In their most critical moments, they may inevitably ask themselves, “What am I living for?”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 358 - 359.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

¹⁶ Piliang (2004): 153 - 15.

3.2. The benefits of reciting *paritta* for curating irrationality and internalizing loving kindness in the postmodern era

Amid the madness and relentless pursuit of desire - leading to moral degradation in postmodern society - the voice of spirituality, particularly morality and religious values, must be revived. Even though this voice must struggle against the euphoria of desire-driven pleasure fueled by capitalism, cyberspace, and the postmodern logic of desire, it remains essential to prevent humanity from heading toward its downfall.¹⁷ The madness experienced by postmodern individuals inevitably affects their subconscious perceptions. In psychology, repeated experiences act as stimuli for the mind, shaping perceptions over time. The more frequently an event is encountered and noticed, the more deeply it influences subconscious thought - whether positively or negatively. These subconscious constructs play a crucial role in shaping one's thinking, ultimately affecting actions, decisions, and even one's entire way of life.¹⁸ This is what the Lord Buddha meant in *MN 19 Dvedhāvitakka Sutta*: "Oh Bhikkhus, whatever a bhikkhu often thinks about and contemplates, that will be the tendency of his mind."¹⁹ That which a person frequently perceives or thinks about will shape the tendency of their mind. Ultimately, thoughts influence every action and speech, as emphasized in *MN.56 Upāli Sutta*. If one seeks to attain true understanding, reason (*ratio*) - particularly critical thinking - must play a crucial role. Truth should not be accepted haphazardly based merely on sensory impressions; rather, it should be approached through rational thought. Therefore, conditioning the mind toward mental well-being is essential by restoring rational, positive perceptions - free from panic and irrationality.

In pathological psychology, not all irrational beliefs indicate a disorder; irrationality can be classified as either pathological or non-pathological. An irrational belief is considered pathologically normal if it arises from ordinary motivations, while it is deemed abnormal if caused by dysfunction due to illness.²⁰ This means that irrationality can, in some cases, be a symptom of a psychological disorder - for example, in schizophrenia, where patients believe that external supernatural forces control them. In today's world, many psychological disorders, such as anxiety and prolonged trauma, are increasingly prevalent due to the pressures of the workplace and the rapid changes of modern society. Additionally, there is a condition known as psychosomatics, in which psychological or emotional distress affects a person's physical health.²¹ This suggests that both physical pain and irrational thinking

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 158 - 160.

¹⁸ Fahmi (2020): 35 - 36.

¹⁹ MN. 19, *Dvedhāvitakka Sutta*. "Yaññadeva, bhikkhave, bhikkhu bahulamanuvitakketi anuvicāreti, tathā tathā nati hoti cetaso."

²⁰ Sakakibara, E "Irrationality and Pathology of Beliefs," *Neuroethics* 9, no. 2 (August 1, 2016): 147 – 157, accessed [December 20, 2024], accessed at: <https://philpapers.org/rec/SAKIAP-2>.

²¹ Tim Kerja Hukum & Humas, "RSUP Dr. Sardjito | Mengenal Psikosomatis," last

patterns may stem from underlying psychological conditions, leading to long-term consequences. In *MN. 75 Māgandiya Sutta*, the Buddha states that health is the highest blessing. However, this health is not limited to physical well-being but also encompasses mental health. As long as a person has not attained full enlightenment - has not yet become an *arahant* - they are not free from *kilesas* (mental impurities). Broadly speaking, there are ten *kilesas*, categorized into three fetters (*samyojana*) and seven underlying tendencies (*anusaya*), as listed in *DN 33 Saṅgīti Sutta*: false view of self-existence (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), clinging to rituals as the key to liberation from suffering (*śīlabataparāmāsa*), sensual desire (*kāmarāga*), ill will (*paṭigha*), craving for existence in the form realm (*rūparāga*), craving for existence in the formless realm (*arūparāga*), conceit (*māna*), attachment to various views (*diṭṭhi*), ignorance (*avijjā*). These *kilesas* are forms of mental affliction. In other words, as long as one has not eradicated them, one is still considered mentally unwell and remains vulnerable to the fluctuations of these impurities, which can intensify and lead to greater mental suffering.

One of the most common religious rituals performed by believers when facing problems and suffering is prayer. In all its forms - including the recitation of *paritta* - prayer is a fundamental aspect of religious life. It serves as a psychological connection between humans and supernatural forces (such as deities or divine beings). Generally, there are two types of prayer: (1) Petitionary prayer, which contains requests to a deity, (2) Prayers of resignation, which involve surrender and acceptance of circumstances. Although Buddhism - especially Theravāda - tends not to recognize petitionary prayer as part of its religious practice, many people still incorporate hopes and requests into their prayers, making them petitionary.²² To derive psychological benefits from prayer, it should be accompanied by an attitude of surrender to God or the Noble Ones. This creates a sense of relief, as the believer feels that they have done their best and entrusted the outcome to a higher power.²³ *Paritta* is defined as "a group of texts taken from the *Tiṭṭaka* and recited on specific occasions to ward off illness and danger."²⁴ However, *paritta* differs from typical prayers found in other religions. As observed in *Paritta* texts, its functions extend beyond petitionary prayer.²⁵ Semantically, *paritta* can serve three dimensions: (1) Petitionary prayer - Seeking protection or blessings, as seen in *Aṅgulimāla Paritta*, *Jaya Paritta*, *Culla Maṅgala Cakkavāla Gāthā*, etc. (2) Prayers of resignation - Expressing sincerity and reverence, such as in *Namakāra Gāthā*, *Pubbabhāganamakāra*, *Tisaraṇa*, *Namakārasiddhi Gāthā*,

modified 2019, accessed December 20, 2024, <https://sardjito.co.id/2019/10/30/mengenal-psikosomatis/>.

²² Thouless (1992): 165 - 167.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 169.

²⁴ Karniawan (2022): 56.

²⁵ Sangha Theravāda Indonesia. (2005). *Paritta Suci: Kumpulan Doa-Doa Perlindungan*. Yayasan Sangha Theravāda Indonesia.

Saccakiriya Gāthā, *Dhajagga Paritta*, etc. (3) Prayers of self-reflection – Serving as a medium for contemplation (*anussati*), including *Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, *Saṅghānussati*, *Bojjhaṅga Paritta*, *Karaṇīyamettā Sutta*, etc. Each of these dimensions carries a therapeutic function, helping individuals find inner calm, think rationally during illness or crisis, and strengthen their faith in Buddhist soteriology. This therapeutic aspect is referred to as *paritta bhesajja* - the healing function of *paritta*. Such healing benefits are available to those who are still alive and in a condition where karmic obstacles can be alleviated. Reciting *paritta* strengthens the mind, enabling patients to better cope with illness.²⁶ In previous research, Karniawan et al. (2022) examined the therapeutic role of *paritta* through Maslow's Theory of Needs, demonstrating that *paritta* recitation fosters security and self-actualization, ultimately supporting rational thinking. However, this study will not delve into the technical findings of their research. Rituals also play a crucial role in reinforcing religious values within a community. They follow a cyclical process of interaction → emotion → symbol → interaction, which, over time, establishes structured patterns.²⁷ These patterns help internalize core religious values that shape societal norms. Therefore, the more frequently and deeply one engages in religious rituals, the more consistently religious values are internalized. A person who regularly recites *paritta* - especially in a communal setting - activates its self-reflection dimension, allowing them to internalize its meaning on a deeper level.

The function of *paritta* as a means of self-reflection can help individuals regain rational awareness and move toward Buddhist soteriology, which ultimately aims to free beings from suffering. René Descartes argued that common sense (*ratio*) is fundamental to all humans. He defined it as the ability to think logically and apply reasoning effectively, famously expressing this in his dictum: *Cogito, ergo sum* – “I think, therefore I am.” For Cartesians (followers of Descartes' philosophy), modern mass media - including the internet, telecommunications, and artificial intelligence - has the potential to manipulate reality outside the subject (*res cogitans*). Those who lack critical thinking skills may uncritically accept viral information as truth, assuming that the media is always accurate. This leads to distorted perceptions of reality, disconnected from actual lived experiences.²⁸ Only through critical and skeptical thinking (*dubito*) - combined with rational analysis (*cogito*) - can individuals attain the “light of information.” This enables them to discern between what is “visible to the eye” and what is “comprehensible by the mind” - ultimately leading to reasoned and rational understanding.²⁹

Postmodern society, which is infected with various forms of craziness as explained above, experiences a condition of hyperreality. They do not even

²⁶ Karniawan (2022): 37 - 39.

²⁷ Foley (2011): 135.

²⁸ Ma'ruf in Ibid. p. 13.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 8 - 9.

have the freedom to simply think or reflect, even though thinking and reflecting are the ways to discern everything - right or wrong, good or bad - rationally. This is where *parittas*, which have a self-reflective dimension, invite us back to the rationality of human thinking by understanding the essence of the *paritta* itself. We cannot deny that in this increasingly fast-paced world, contemplation and thinking have become rare and valuable commodities that are difficult to find. *Parittas* with a self-reflective dimension, such as:³⁰

i. *Brahmavihāra Pharaṇā*: Inviting us to internalize reflection in our minds so that we always cultivate four noble inner states, namely (1) *mettā* (loving-kindness), (2) *karuṇā* (compassion), (3) *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and (4) *upekkhā* (equanimity), which we continuously apply to ourselves and other beings. This stands in stark contrast to the average postmodern human being, who exhibits apathy, anarchy, egoism (prioritizing oneself), paradoxicality, and ambivalence as the massive impact of the “craziness” in the era of postmodernism.

ii. *Abhiṇhapaccavekkhaṇa*: Encourages frequent reflection on rational truths that no one can deny: that in reality, I will experience old age, illness, death, separation from what is loved and enjoyed, and I will be responsible for the actions I have committed. This reflection makes humans aware of what is called *kāmatanḥā* (sensual desire, in Buddhist terminology)³¹ or *id* (animalistic desires) and strengthens the *superego* (moral values), as explained in Freud’s psychoanalysis.³²

iii. *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*:³³ Contains the Buddha’s discourse that guides humans in navigating the path of asceticism. As an ascetic (*samaṇa*), one must be free from two extreme states: indulging in sensual pleasures and engaging in self-mortification. Instead, the Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path as the key to transcending suffering (*dukkha*) and attaining higher wisdom - broad vision (*cakkhukaraṇī*), knowledge (*ñāṇakaraṇī*), peace (*upasamāya*), extraordinary inner ability (*abhiññāya*), supreme consciousness (*sambodhāya*), and ultimately, the attainment of *nibbāna*. All of these are summarized in the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) and can be understood through the framework of the three pillars of the philosophy of science: ontology, epistemology, and axiology, as illustrated in the theoretical diagram above.

From this chart, we can see that the Buddha was a constructive-rationalist thinker. He invited his followers to perceive the deep reality of life’s phenomena (in the ontological dimension), which are characterized by *sukha-dukkha* (happiness and suffering). Phenomenologically (in the epistemological

³⁰ Sangha Theravada Indonesia, 2005.

³¹ Bluesky (2015): 45.

³² Lapsley & Stey (2011) the “preserver of all things,” incorporating the elements of sexuality and self-preservation. This is in contrast to the opposing tendency to reduce life to an inanimate state, or the “death instinct,” which is revealed by aggression and sadism. Erotogenic zones The zones of the body (oral, anal, phallic): 34.

³³ SN. 56.11.

dimension), he discerned that the *noumenon* causing human suffering is desire (*taṇhā*). According to the law of causality, if desire ceases, suffering ceases; if desire exists, suffering exists. The Buddha then offered a practical solution (in the axiological dimension): the Noble Eightfold Path, consisting of eight right factors - right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (*sammā samādhi*). These lead to two final right attainments - right knowledge and right liberation - allowing one to be free from suffering and ultimately bringing great peace to the world. Within the framework of these Four Noble Truths, Buddhism presents a futuristic teaching - a form of scientific problem-solving. This structure aligns with modern scientific paradigms: identifying a problem (first noble truth), diagnosing its cause (second noble truth), proposing a prognosis (third noble truth), and prescribing a solution (fourth noble truth). Such a methodology invites humans to reassess life from the perspective of objective reality.³⁴ Many more *parittas* contain a self-reflective dimension, encouraging readers to gain wisdom through contemplation (*cittamaya paññā*),³⁵ and guiding them to perceive reality rationally, liberating them from the “madness” of hyperreality in the postmodern era.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Postmodern society is marked by an ambivalent relationship with tradition, wherein it simultaneously embraces religious wisdom and consumerist tendencies. Unlike the rigid rationalism of modernity, postmodern thought exhibits a renewed openness to spiritual traditions, yet this openness is frequently co-opted by market-driven forces. Religious rituals, once deeply embedded in lived tradition and ethical cultivation, have increasingly become commodified, aligning with a culture that prioritizes curated, transactional, and emotionally gratifying experiences. This commodification extends to the recitation of *paritta*, which is often consumed as a means of achieving immediate psychological comfort rather than as a sustained practice of ethical and cognitive transformation. Within this context, ritual practice serves not only as a conduit for spiritual fulfillment but also as a therapeutic mechanism that reinforces communal belonging, personal resilience, and existential security. However, the efficacy of such practices hinges on their capacity to facilitate emotional regulation and cognitive realignment rather than being reduced to a passive, consumable act. A fundamental paradox of postmodern religiosity is its simultaneous yearning for transcendence and its preference for expedient, pragmatic solutions, leading to the proliferation of commodified neospiritualism - where sacred rituals, mystical artifacts, and esoteric teachings are monetized to cater to the demands of an immediate-results-driven culture. This phenomenon not only exacerbates consumerist tendencies but also distances individuals from the deeper ethical and epistemological dimensions of Buddhist teachings. The pressures of late capitalism, digital hyperreality,

³⁴Priastana (2017): 78 - 80.

³⁵DN. 33, *Saṅgiti Sutta*.

and postmodern relativism contribute to a growing psychological and moral burden, manifesting in excessive desires, an obsession with speed, materialistic aspirations, and the dominance of spectacle culture. In response to this, the Buddha, as articulated in the *Dvedhāvitakka Sutta* (MN 19) and *Upāli Sutta* (MN 56), underscores the formative role of habitual thought in shaping one's ethical disposition and mental clarity. The practice of *paritta* - when engaged with as a contemplative and self-reflective discipline—offers a counterbalance to the distractions of postmodern existence, fostering rational discernment and psychological equanimity.

From the perspective of Buddhist sociology, *paritta* serves three primary functions: petitionary prayer, surrender (*paṭisarāṇa*), and self-reflection (*anussati*). The reflective dimension of *paritta* is particularly significant, as it encourages deep contemplation, reinforcing emotional stability and rational inquiry. This aligns with the Buddhist concept of *paritta bhesaja*, wherein recitation is not merely ritualistic but functions as a form of mental medicine, cultivating resilience against existential distress. Key examples of *paritta* that embody this transformative potential include: (1) *Brahmavihāra Pharaṇā*, which nurtures the four sublime states (*brahmavihāra*): loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These qualities serve as antidotes to the alienation and competitive anxieties engendered by postmodern individualism; (2) *Abhiñhapaccavekkhaṇa*, which fosters awareness of impermanence (*anicca*) and the ethical ramifications of actions (*kamma*), grounding practitioners in a realistic and morally accountable worldview; (3) *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, which expounds the Four Noble Truths as a rational framework for understanding suffering (*dukkha*) and its cessation through the Noble Eightfold Path. Through the sustained internalization of *paritta*, individuals can cultivate a mindset attuned to wisdom (*paññā*), ethical responsibility (*sīla*), and mindful presence (*sati*), thereby resisting the disorienting forces of postmodern hyperreality. Rather than serving as a mere ritualistic recitation, *paritta* - when integrated with deep meditative reflection - becomes a tool for critical engagement with reality, offering a pathway not only toward psychological healing but also toward genuine liberation (*vimutti*). Future scholarship may further explore the epistemological depth of *paritta* as a means of counteracting the fragmentation and commodification of spirituality in contemporary society.

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BUDDHIST TEACHINGS FOR WORLD PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

This paper explores some of the Buddhist Teachings relevant for world peace and sustainable development in the present-day context. War and violence have become everyday reality on this planet. Many approaches and concepts of peace building and conflict transformation have been developed and tested without any lasting results. The reason being, most of those approaches tend to focus mainly on external aspects and not on inner peace. Without inner peace, there cannot be outer peace; without peace in every individual, no peace can ever be imagined in the family, society, nation and the world as a whole.

Sustainable development in terms of economic development, inclusive growth and proper solutions to environmental problems cannot be achieved in the absence of peace. Peace and sustainable development are interrelated, whereas peace is the prerequisite for all the aspects of sustainable development, to maintain peace, development must be sustainable. In the context of war, no developmental activities can be implemented in sustainable ways.

Looking at world affairs today, one can easily conclude that more focus is being given to physical development and less on inner peace and mindfulness. People today are guided more by greed and grievances than love, compassion and peace. Therefore, with increasing physical and material development, people are not necessarily happier. Their wants are unlimited, and thus there is overexploitation of all the resources, leading to irreparable natural crises. *Tripitaka* contains a score of teachings that are relevant to peace and sustainable development. If those teachings are educated, practiced and applied, peace and sustainable development would be real in this world. The article is based mainly on the textual analysis of the *Pāli* Buddhist teachings as contained in the *Tripitaka* and some secondary literature.

Keywords: *Peace, sustainable development, inclusion, mindfulness, economic growth, environmental sustainability, right livelihood.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The main theme “Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development”, as well as all the sub themes for this year’s Wesak celebration are just apt for today’s world. The world today is divided, many violent conflicts happening around the globe in the name of religion, communal perceptions, gender, political ideologies, rich, poor, powerful, powerless caste, creed, and so on. Perhaps the world is witnessing the degree of environmental degradation as never before. Life with dignity has become far from rich for a larger section of the world’s population.

Peace in its holistic meaning embraces well-being, happiness and harmony of all sentient beings and is the goal as well as the very nature of every being. Thus, peace embraces prosperity as well. Buddhist teaching envisions peace as the art of living, it is the path as well as the goal, and it is essentially an inner state of mind that spreads outwards to the family, society, community, nation, and to the whole world. United Nations in its declaration for the right of people to peace¹ recognizes peace as “not only the absence of conflict, but also a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation”.

Sustainable development is defined by the United Nations² as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. It reiterates the importance of harmonizing the three core elements, which are economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection for sustainable development to be effectively achieved. These interconnected are essential for individual and societal wellbeing. The core focus is on eradicating poverty in all forms and dimensions. This requires promoting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, that creates greater opportunities for everyone, reduces inequalities, raises basic standards of living, fosters equitable social development and inclusion, and promotes integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.

1.2. Sustainable development goals

In the year 2015, the world leaders came together and made a historic promise to secure - being of everyone on a healthy, thriving planet and adopted 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs)³. They are as follows:

1. No poverty

¹ UN General Assembly (1984), *Declaration of right of the peoples to peace*, accessed on [February 07, 2025] available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/74608?v=pdf>

² Brundtland commission, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, accessed on [February 07, 2025], available at: <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

³ UNDP-Sustainable Development Goals, accessed on [January 17, 2025], available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships

According to the UN, the sustainable development goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They attempt to address the global challenges the world is facing today, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice; practically all those issues, stated in the main theme and the sub themes. We are already at the start of 2025 and there is not much time left until 2030. The world today is faced with many challenges like wars, violent conflicts, epidemics, environmental crises, inequalities, and exclusion, and this is still far from achieving those goals. Therefore, alternative approaches must be considered to more effectively and efficiently work towards achieving those goals, which would ensure: “Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity for World Peace and Sustainable Development”.

The Buddha, in his 45 years of teaching after enlightenment, taught exactly on those issues. By applying at least some of his teachings, one can certainly get closer to achieving those goals.

1.3. Some Buddhist insights related to sustainable development goals

Tripitaka contains a large number of teachings that are relevant to world peace and sustainable development and address meaningful economic development, discrimination and exclusion as well as environmental challenges. Some examples of *Pāli* literature as the source for sustainable community development⁴ are as follows:

1.3.1. Human welfare and ethics: Human welfare is the central theme of

⁴ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings (unpublished)*. Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 96.

the *Pāli* literature. The Buddha set forth his disciples in all directions for the welfare and happiness of most people. One single verse of the *Dhammapada* explains the gist of the Buddha's teachings: *Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa upasampadā. sacittapariyodapanam etaṃ buddhānasāsaṇaṃ*⁵; "Not to do any evil, to cultivate what is wholesome, to purify one's mind: this is the teaching of the Buddhas"⁶. Some examples for the source of human welfare and ethics as mentioned in the the above presentation⁷ are: *Vinaya piṭaka*, *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* (DN), *Aggañña Sutta* (DN), *Sigālovāda Sutta* (DN), *Abhisanda sutta* (AN), *Maṅgala Sutta* (KN), *Parābhava Sutta* (KN) and *Dhammapada* (KN).

1.3.2. The source to establish harmony and peace: *Pāli* Literature as a whole is a compilation of Buddha's teachings aiming towards the establishment of an ideal society. The teachings were directed, among others, towards being free from all problems in the society such as the slavery system, the caste system, inequality, untouchability and all kinds of social discrimination. If applied in daily life, the world will be a place with harmony and peace. Some of the relevant teachings⁸ are: *Aggañña Sutta* (DN), *Kūṭadanta* (DN), *Sigālovāda Sutta* (DN), *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (DN), *Vasala sutta* (KN), *Vāseṭṭha sutta* (KN), *Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN), *Samyogavisamyoḡa Sutta* (AN), *Chalabhijātiya-sutta* (AN) and *Dhammapada* (KN).

1.3.3. The source of gender and women empowerment⁹: Buddha wants to uplift the miserable condition of women in society. He provided an opportunity to practice spiritual life for them. Buddha mentioned that like males, any woman can get spiritual progress and salvation. Some primary sources for women empowerment are: *Dhīta Sutta* (SN), *Soma Sutta* (SN), *Sigālovāda Sutta* (DN), *Uggaha Sutta* (AN), *Nakulapitu Sutta* (AN), *Nandamātā Sutta* (AN), *Gotami Sutta* (AN), *Therī-gāthā*, *Mahāpajāpati Gotamī Apadāna* (*Apadāna Pāli*), *Pācittiya Pāli* (*Vinaya-piṭaka*).

1.3.4. Freedom of thinking¹⁰: The Buddha always encouraged freedom of thinking. It is a fundamental right of common human beings. In *Pāli* literature, it is mentioned that Buddha has given freedom to think on religious, spiritual, social, economic, cultural, educational, and political issues. Some of the sources are: *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN), *Kālāma Sutta* (AN), *Canki Sutta* (MN), *Tittha Sutta* (KN), *Upāli Sutta* (MN).

⁵ *Dhammapada* 183 (KN).

⁶ Peter Harvey (2000), *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, p v, University Press, Cambridge.

⁷ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 97.

⁸ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 98 - 99.

⁹ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p.100 - 101.

¹⁰ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 102 - 103.

1.3.5. Establishing human rights¹¹: Pāli Literature plays a unique role in the establishment of human rights. The basic human rights have been declared by the Buddha in the 6th century B.C. The Human Rights Commission of the United Nations has adopted them, emphasizing on equality, freedom, and universal brotherhood, as the main ingredients of human rights guaranteeing happiness for all living beings. Some of the teachings contained in the Tripitaka in this regard are: *Singālovāda Sutta* (DN), *Abhisanda Sutta* (AN), *Samgaha Sutta* (AN), *Mahāvagga Pāli*.

1.3.6. Peace, social and religious harmony¹²: Peace and harmony are the foundation for sustainable community development. Buddhism is known as Dhamma of peace and social harmony. The essence of all the teachings by the Enlightened one is peace, not only external, but more about inner peace. Some of the sources in the Tripitaka are: *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN), *Pasūra Sutta* – Sn (KN), *Upāli Sutta* (MN), *Kathāvatthu Sutta* (AN), *Kukkuravatika Sutta* (MN), *Abhayarājakumāra Sutta* (MN), *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* (MN), *Mahāvaccagotta Sutta* (MN), *Dīghanakha Sutta* (MN).

1.3.7. Economic development¹³: Pāli Literature contributes to the development of economic thoughts. Buddha has given valuable economic theory for a happy human life. He gave us the concept of right livelihood. Some of the relevant sources for economic development are: *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* (DN), *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN), *Sigālovāda Sutta* (DN), *Pattakamma Sutta* (AN), *Vyagghapajja Sutta* (AN), *Vañijjā Sutta* (AN), *Mahādukkakhandha Sutta* (MN), *Ananya Sutta* (AN), *Cullaseṭṭhi Jātakaṃ* (JA).

1.3.8. Humanity development¹⁴: Buddha taught dhamma to establish humanity in this world. *Sīla* (Morality), *Samādhi* (Mental Discipline), and *Paññā* (Wisdom) are the principal teachings of the Buddha. Some of the sources found in *Tripiṭaka* in this regard are: *Brahmavihāra Sutta* (AN), *Abhisanda Sutta* (AN), *Singālovāda Sutta* (DN), *Sangaha Sutta* (AN), *Metta Sutta* (AN), *Metta Sutta* (KN), *Mettā Sutta* (SN), *Karuṇā Sutta* (SN), *Muditā Sutta* (SN), *Upekkhā Sutta* (SN), *Dhammapada* (KN).

1.3.9. Good governance¹⁵: In the Pāli Literature, many teachings regarding good governance, some of the examples are: *Aggañña Sutta* (DN), *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta* (DN), *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN), *Samgaha Sutta* (AN), *Mahāmaṃsa Jātakaṃ* (JA), *Mahāsilava Jātakaṃ* (JA).

¹¹ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 104 - 105.

¹² Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 106 - 107.

¹³ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 109-110.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 111-112.

¹⁵ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 113-114.

1.3.10. Education¹⁶: The Buddha is the greatest teacher the world has ever seen till today. He is defined as the “*sattḥādevamanussanaṃ*”, teacher of the human beings as well as the Devas. The Pāli canon is full of evidence on how he used (*upāyakusala*) to teach people from all ranks and levels. Some of the sources are: *Khīppanīsanti-sutta* (AN), *Sikkhā-sutta* (AN), *Kevaddha* (*Kevaṭṭa Sutta*) (DN), *Cūlavēdalla-sutta* (MN), *Bhaddāli Sutta* (MN), *Pavāraṇa-sutta* (SN), *Sammāsambuddha-sutta* (SN), *Sekkha-sutta* (AN), *Sigālaka-sutta* (DN), *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* (MN), *Pācīnaninna-sutta* (SN), *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* (DN), *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (MN), *kālāma – sutta* (AN).

1.3.11. Environment: The Buddha is an advocate of the Middle Path. He strictly denounced extremities, be it with his conduct towards oneself or the outer world. The exalted one taught how to handle everything, including nature and its resources, mindfully and without harming anything. Some of the teachings in this regard are: *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Precepts (Sīla)*, *Dhammapada*, *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN), *Vanaropasutta* (SN).

II. Buddhist insights on world peace and sustainable development

2.1. Practicalities of Buddhist insights of peace building in modern context

In the present-day world, violence and war have become a common reality. Numerous peace and stability initiatives have been developed, yet most have proven ineffective due to their focus on external factors rather than inner peace. Outer peace cannot be attained without inner peace, a crucial element often overlooked. This article, based on review of Pāli and other relevant literature, argues that the Buddha’s teachings on cultivating inner peace offer this missing link, strengthening peace building efforts and contributing to a more sustainable path to global peace and prosperity. It explores how incorporating these teachings can enhance existing approaches and lead to more effective and lasting results.

Peace in its holistic meaning embraces well-being, happiness and harmony of all sentient beings and is a goal as well as the very nature of every being. Thus, peace embraces prosperity as well. Buddhist teaching envisions peace as the art of living, it is the path as well as the goal and it is essentially an inner state of mind that spreads outwards to the family, society, community, nation and the whole world.

Violence and wars today have become commercially lucrative for the weapon industries. The arms trade, a multi-billion-dollar industry, fuels the economies of many nations. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute¹⁷ (SIPRI) reports an increase in arms revenue in all regions, with a substantial rise among countries based in Russia and the Middle East. Wars essentially originate

¹⁶ Bhikkhu Sankicca (2020), *Presentation on Pāli literature as main source for Buddhist Writings* (unpublished). Kathmandu: Theravada Buddhist Academy, p. 115-116.

¹⁷ SIPRI, *World’s top arms producers see revenues rise on the back of wars and regional tensions*, accessed on [February 07, 2025], available at <https://www.sipri.org/media/p.ress-release/2024>

in the human minds; therefore, lasting peace is not possible without inner transformation. The Buddha had taught this very particular aspect of transforming one's mind continuously for 45 years after his enlightenment. He instructed all his disciples to do the same as the following verse from *Dutiya Mārapāsa Sutta* suggests: “*Caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ; bahujana-hitāya bahujana-sukhāya, lokānukampāya, atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ*.”¹⁸ “Go your ways, oh monks, for the benefit and happiness (peace and prosperity) of many, out of compassion for the world; for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men”.

2.2. Defining peace and prosperity

Generally, people define and understand peace in various ways depending on the context. It is subjective and may bear different meanings to different people. For example, for a mother, whose child is sick, peace would mean that her child gets proper treatment and gets healed. Similarly, if one has severe toothache, the person may think, peace is having no toothache. For those living during a war, the end of war would mean peace. These are all conditions of “absence of peace”. This shows that people become aware of peace only in its absence. Another example is: people start talking about peace when there is violence or war. Generally, the understanding is PEACE is “absence of violence”. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines peace as “a state of tranquility or quiet: such as a) freedom from civil disturbance; b) a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom”¹⁹. Both definitions embrace the PEACE in the context of the “absence of violence”.

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines prosperity as “the condition of being successful or thriving; especially economic well-being”. Prosperity is defined mainly in terms of money. Holistically, prosperity must essentially embrace happiness, harmony, and physical and mental well-being. That is possible only in the context of peace. Johan Galtung, a world-renowned peace educationist and peace maker, defines peace as the capacity to transform conflict positively or constructively.²⁰ He further argues that peace can be learned and practiced. Lord Buddha has shown us the way of learning and practicing peace.

2.3. Theories of conflict, violence and peace

According to Theresa Der-lan Yeh, Buddhists believe the Buddha, meaning “the awakened one,” discovered universal laws that operate eternally, regardless of his discovery.²¹ Central among these is the law of Karma. Also known as

¹⁸ *Samyutta Nikāya*, IV (I).5, accessed on [January 17, 2025], available at: <http://www.vridhamma.org/node/2488>

¹⁹ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, accessed on [January 17, 2025], available at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peace>

²⁰ *HandWiki*, Social:Conflict triangle, accessed on [February 07, 2025], available at: http://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?title=Social:Conflict_triangle&oldid=2590676

²¹ Theresa Der-lan Yeh, *The Way to Peace: A Buddhist Perspective*, international journal of peace studies, volume 11, p. 91 - 112, accessed on [February 07, 2025], available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41852939>

dependent origination. This principle explains the true nature of reality, stating that everything, sentient and insentient, exists only in relation to everything else. If the conditions for existence cease, the thing itself ceases. Nothing exists independently, everything is interconnected and dependent.

Further she opines that the Norwegian peace studies pioneer Johan Galtung resembles closest to the Buddhist worldview with his dynamic, complex peace theory. Galtung describes the world as “precisely a process based on diversity and symbiotic (mutually influential) interaction.” Within this reality, peace for Galtung, is not a static state, but an ongoing, interactive process. In this world of multi-leveled plurality, according to Galtung, peace is not a stable, end state but a more interactive process of a series of changing and balancing acts, a continuous dialogue between our actions and the world around us.

Johan Galtung suggests three factors as the cause of any conflict: Attitude, Behavior, and the Contradicting Context. He describes it as a triangle widely known as the ABC triangle of conflict, he similarly defines three aspects of violence: Direct, Structural, and Cultural, as shown below (see figure 1 below)²².

2.4. Approaches to peace and prosperity: comparing modern theories with Buddhist teaching

As mentioned earlier, Galtung defines peace as the capacity to cope with conflict and violence creatively and constructively leading towards positive transformation. As shown in the following diagram, Galtung suggests that the ABC triangle of conflict can be transformed into the peace triangle by transforming Attitude into Empathy, transforming behaviour into non-violent behaviour, and contradiction into creativity.

However, it is not mentioned how it can be done. Buddhist teachings offer numerous practices that cultivate these qualities. For instance, the practice of the four immeasurable: Compassion, Loving Kindness, Appreciative Joy and Equanimity fosters true empathy. Similarly, the five precepts, when diligently followed, promote non-violent and wholesome behaviour, help in the cultivation of non-violent and wholesome behaviour. Buddhist texts abound with enough examples of creative peace interventions at individual, social and international levels.

²² Galtung, J. (1996) *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. Sage Publications, London, accessed on (January 17, 2025), available at: <http://www.scrip..org/reference/referencesp.ap.ers?referenceid=2538070>

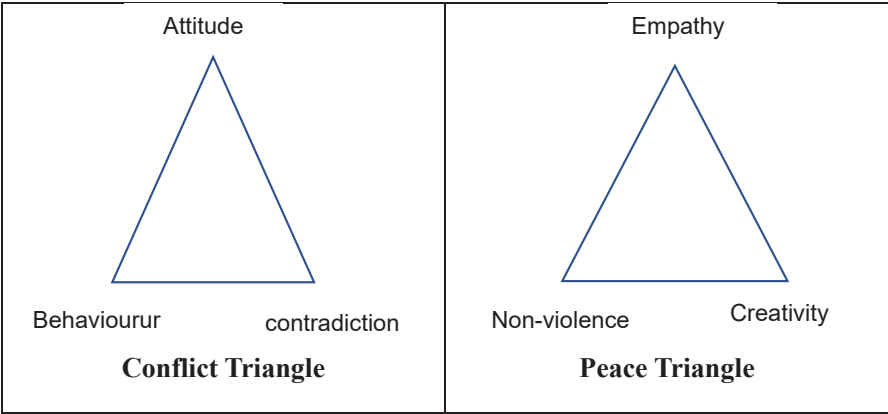


Fig-1: Conflict Triangle and Peace Triangle

Dr. Scilla Elworthy explains her model of breaking the cycle of violence: As a result of atrocity or violence, people get shocked and terror, followed by fear/pain, followed by grief, then anger, bitterness, comes revenge, retaliation, and atrocity repeats in the cycle.²³ She further iterates that to break the cycle, one must intervene at the level of anger, as it is generally expressed. She emphasizes the importance of presence of mind in doing so and also stresses that the difficult thing to do is to have presence of mind. See the diagram below:

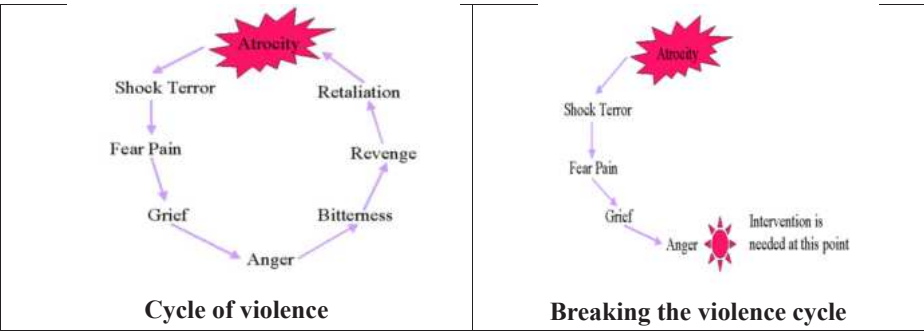


Fig-2: Cycle of violence and breaking the violence cycle

However, she also does mention that one has to be very mindful, and it is difficult to be, and mentions the importance of meditation.

Buddha’s teaching on dependent origination²⁴ (see the sketch below) however clearly mentions, how the anger can be observed at the sensation level through insight meditation. Insight meditation (*Vipassanā*) teaches exactly how various emotions of hatred, anger, greed and grievances can be

²³ Scilla Elworthy & Paul Rogers, *The War on Terrorism*” by The Oxford Research Group, accessed on [February 08, 2025], available at; <http://www.globalacademy.media/scilla-elworthy-how-to-break-cycles-of-violence>

²⁴ *Maha-nidana Sutta: The Great Causes Discourse* , DN 15 PTS: D ii 55;

uprooted through observation of sensations (*Vedanā*) arising at the body level. By deeper contemplation on the true dhamma, one can cultivate the quality of equanimity by understanding precisely the universal law of suffering, non-selfness and impermanence, and cultivate peace of mind. People dwelling in inner peace will essentially spread peace outwards and will never cause war or violence.

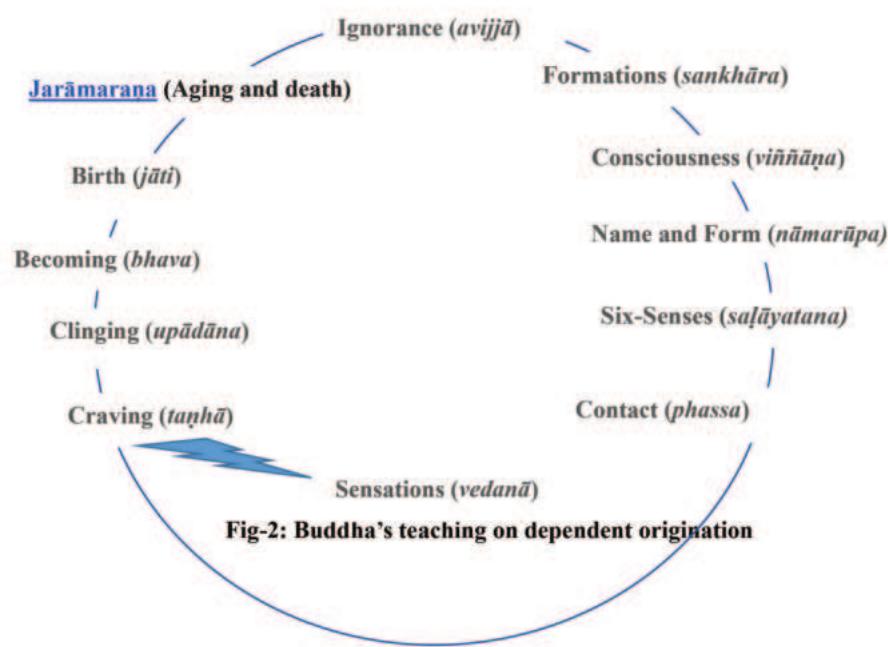


Fig-2: Buddha's teaching on dependent origination

2.5. Buddhist insights on economic development

Throughout the *Pāli* Canon, there is a large number of teachings on economic growth. This paper presents two aspects:

2.5.1. Right livelihood - *Sammāājīvo*

In the very first teaching of the Buddha, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN-56) the Buddha expounded the teachings of Right Livelihood as follows: “*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ – ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, seyyathidaṃ – sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi.*”²⁵

And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path – right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration²⁶.

²⁵ S. V. 420.
²⁶ Bhikkhu Thanissaro, *Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion* translated from the Pali, ac-

Right livelihood leads to sustainable development without harming oneself and the nature or environment. According to Venerable Ilukkevela Dhammaratana, the general interpretation of economics is “social science that studies production, distribution and consumption of goods and services”.²⁷ In Buddhism, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services are discussed. The difference between Buddhist economics and the subject of economy is the ethical basis. In Buddhism, the priority is given to the morality (*sīla*). All the Buddhists are expected to follow the Noble Eightfold Path. When an individual follows the Path from beginning to the end, he comes to the 5th path factor, *sammā ājīva* (right living). The generally accepted view of *sammā ājīva* means abstaining from the wrong way of trading. The *Vyagghapajjasutta*²⁸ explains *sammā ājīva* as “And what is right livelihood? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood: This is called right livelihood.”²⁹

By adhering to the right Living as taught by the Buddha, the goals of sustainable community development in the true sense with economic growth can be achieved. It will foster social inclusion as well as environmental protection can be sought meaningfully, maintaining peace and harmony at the same time.

2.5.2. The wrong sacrifice and the right sacrifice, *Kūṭadanta Sutta*³⁰ highlights the methods of building sustainable peace and economic prosperity for self and society as well as a nation in general. This teaching has important messages on economic development, peace, as well as environmental aspects. In this *sutta*, the Blessed One explains clearly the creation of adequate employment opportunities suitable for various sections of the population and providing them with required subsidies and support, will foster sustainable economic development as well as peace and harmony in the communities. All this will have a positive impact on the environment as well, as mindful people well established in the precepts will interact ethically and mindfully create a conducive environment for all to coexist interdependently without harming each other. At the same time this *sutta* also advocates for balance in the environment, as it mentions that no trees were cut, no grass was mown, and no animals were slain. The Buddha mentions that the best sacrifice, which

cessed on [January 13, 2025], available at; <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tip.itaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html>

²⁷ Venerable Ilukkevela Dhammaratana (2011), *Lecture on Buddhist Economy* accessed on [January 13, 2025], available at; <http://bp.unotes1.weebly.com/buddhist-economy.html>

²⁸ *Vyagghapajjasutta* AN 8.54 P.TS: A iv 281.

²⁹ “Right Livelihood: *samma ajivo*”, edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight* (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, Accessed on [February 12, 2025], available at; <http://www.accesstoinight.org/p.tf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-ajivo/index.htm>:

³⁰ *Kūṭadanta Sutta*; (DN-5), accessed on [January 17, 2025], available at: VRI, p.120-www.tip.itaka.org

is less difficult and more powerful, is when one becomes truly established with full devotion and confidence in the five precepts.

2.6. Buddha's teachings on inclusive growth

The Buddha had as his disciples men and women from all spectrums of society; They comprised men and women belonging to the royalties, ministers, elites, aristocrats, rich and poor, general population, slaves, traders, children, and adults as well. He never differentiated or discriminated against his followers based on caste, creed, class, and gender. Even about 2600 years ago, the Buddha promoted Gender and Social Inclusion in his teachings. Not only did He include everyone, but He also designed teachings to suit requirements by all by using many different psycho-social means. From among the ocean of teachings contained in the *Pāli Canon*, this paper explores the following:

2.7. Seven conditions for a nation's welfare:

Here the Buddha explains 7 conditions of non-decline of the Vajjīs (*Vajjī aparihāniyā dhammā*, D 2:73; A 4:15)³¹:

- (1) "They gather regularly, and their meetings are well-attended."
- (2) "They gather in fellowship, adjourn in fellowship, manage Vajjī affairs in fellowship."
- (3) "They do not promulgate what has not been promulgated, and do not abolish what has been promulgated, but keep to the Vajjī code."
- (4) "They honour, respect, esteem, revere Vajjī elders and consider it worthwhile to listen to them."
- (5) "They do not forcibly abduct women and maidens of family, compelling them to cohabit with them."
- (6) "They honour, respect, esteem, revere their shrines within the city and those outside, and do not neglect the proper offerings previously given."
- (7) "They duly protect and shelter the arhats [worthy ones] so that those who have not yet come will come, and those who have come will dwell at ease."

2.8. Mallikā Sutta³²

The Buddha delivered this teaching to the king Pasenadi of Kosala, who was disheartened by the birth of his daughter, Queen Mallikā's child. The story begins in Sāvattihī, where King Pasenadi was visiting the enlightened one. A messenger arrived with the news of the queen giving birth to a daughter, causing the king to be disappointed. Recognizing the king's feelings, the Awakened one then spoke these verses: "*Itthipi hi ekacciya, seyya posa janādhīpa./Medhāvinī sīlavatī, sassudevā patibbatā./"Tassā yo jāyati poso, sūro hoti disampati;/Tādisā subhagiya [subharyāputto (ka.)] putto, rajjampi anusāsati"ti*"³³.

³¹ *Paṭhama Aparihāniya Sutta*, Translated & annotated by Piya Tan, accessed on [February 08, 2025], available at: <http://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/55.11-Aparihaniya-Dhamma-S-1-a7.21-piya.pdf>

³² *Mallikā Sutta, Sagathavagga*, SN 3.16

³³ *Mallikā Sutta*, Vipassana Research Institute, p.55, accessed on [February 07, 2025],

“Well, some women are better than men, O ruler of the people and virtuous, a devoted wife who honors her mother-in-law. And when she has a son, he becomes a hero, O lord of the land. The son of such a blessed lady may even rule the realm”³⁴.

Vasala Sutta³⁵

One day, while on his alms round in Sāvattthī, the Buddha saw a fire and offerings being prepared at the home of the Brahmin Aggikabhāradvāja. As the Buddha approached, the Brahmin called out, insulting him with derogatory terms like “shaveling”, “wretched monk” and “outcast”. The Buddha responded by asking the Brahmin if he knew the definition of an outcast and the reasons for such a designation. The Brahmin admitted his ignorance, prompting the Buddha to deliver a discourse, the “*Vasala Sutta*” or “Discourse on Outcasts,” containing 27 verses, explaining in 27 verses. The gist of the teaching is expounded in the 27th verse as “Not by birth is one an outcast; not by birth is one a brahmin. By deed one becomes an outcast, by deed one becomes a brahmin”³⁶.

2.9. Buddha’s teachings relevant to environmental protection

The Buddha is an advocate of the Middle Path. He strictly denounced extremities, be it with his conduct towards oneself or the outer world. The *Tripitaka* is an ocean of teachings on all aspects of life and the world. The Exalted one taught how to deal with everything, including nature and its resources, mindfully and without harming anything. This paper attempts to explore some of the selected teachings from the Teachings related to environmental aspects.

The rules propounded by the Buddha in *Vinaya-piṭaka* for the monks contain various aspects of environmental protection like recycling of robes, behaviour towards plants and animals, and so on, which are very well applicable for lay people as well. The five precepts and the right livelihood essentially teach ethical actions and mindfulness while interacting with nature.

Elaborated below are some of the selected teachings mentioned in the Pāli Canon related to environmental issues:

2.9.1. Macchariyakosiyasetthivatthu

The Buddha delivered this teaching, while residing at Jatavana Monastery, in reference to his chief disciple Mahā Moggallāna and the miserly rich man, Kosiya: *Yathāpi bhamaro pupphaṃ vaṇṇagandhamahethayaṃ paleti rasamādāya evaṃ gāme muni care*³⁷. As the bee collects nectar and flies away

available at: www.trip.itaka.org

³⁴ Bhikkhu Sujato, A Daughter, accessed on [February 07, 2025], available at <http://suttacentral.net/sn3.16/en/sujato>

³⁵ *Vasala Sutta*: discourse on outcasts. SN 1. 7

³⁶ Piyadassi Thero, *The Book of Protection-discourse on outcasts*, accessed on [February 10, 2025], available at http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bp_sut22/

³⁷ *Macchariyakosiyasetthivatthu*, *Dhammapadapāli*, Vipassana Research Institute, p.5, accessed on [February 10, 2025], available at: www.trip.itaka.org

without damaging the flower or its colour or its scent, so also, let the bhikkhu dwell and act in the village (without affecting the faith and generosity or the wealth of the villagers)³⁸. This teaching by the Buddha advises monks on proper conduct within a village, comparing them to bumblebees. Just as a bee gathers nectar without harming the flower's appearance or fragrance, a monk should reside and behave in a village without negatively impacting the villagers' faith, generosity and prosperity.

2.9.2. *Guṇajātakavaṇṇana*³⁹

The commentary on *Guṇajātaka* mentions that 500 queens of the king of Kosala presented their 500 new robes gifted to them by him to Bhikkhu Ananda. Knowing that the Buddha permits only three robes for each monk, he gets angry, and He asked Ananda why he took five hundred robes when the Buddha's rules forbid his disciples from having more than three. Ananda explained that though he accepted the gift, he did not keep it; instead, he gave robes to other disciples who needed new ones. Then the king asks, what those Bhikkhus will do with their old robes, and this conversation is mentioned in the *Guṇajātakavaṇṇana* as follows: To assure the king that his offerings were not being wasted, Ananda explained the life cycle of the old robes. When monks received new ones, the old ones were repurposed. Firstly, they became upper robes, then undergarments, followed by bed sheets, mats, and towels. Finally, the worn-out fabric was shredded and used as mortar for construction. The king was pleased with his explanation and gifted Ananda the remaining five hundred robes (translation from Dunda Bahadur Bajracharya⁴⁰). Piya Tan⁴¹ (2009, 2011) in his translation of How the robes are recycled, Accounts from Vinay and Commentaries on *Cullavagga* points out three mentions about recycling of old robes in *Tripitaka* as follows: in Rajagaha Council; in Samavati Vatthu, Dhammapada Atthakatha; in *Guna Jātaka*.

According to him, those three accounts state that the old robes were recycled as cover sheets, floor sheets, covers for pillows and mattresses, foot towels, dusters (cleaning rags), floor spread, and spread into the wall. The *Guna Jātaka* mentions that the older upper robes were made into undergarments.

2.9.3. *Adhammika Sutta*

The enlightened one explains that when the leaders are principled and righteous, all other people from every section of the population follow the

³⁸ *Dhammapada* verse 49, Macchariyakosiyasetthivatthu, accessed on [February 10, 2025], available at: <http://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp./verseload.p.hp?verse=049>

³⁹ *Guṇajātakavaṇṇana-157, Jatakaatthakatha-2*, p.p. 12-15, Vipassana Research Institute, accessed on [February 10, 2025], available at: www.tripitaka.org

⁴⁰ Dunda Bahadur Bajracharya (2011), *The Jataka* (Stories of the Buddha's Former Births in Nepali Bhasha language), vol-2, p.p. 17 - 22, Tripitak Translation Board, Lalitpur.

⁴¹ Piya Tan (2009, 2011), *How the Robes are Recycled, Accounts from the Vinay and Commentaries*, Translation from Pali, accessed on [February 10, 2025], available at: (<http://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/37.14-How-robes-are-recycled.-p.iya.p.df>), p. 202.

being principled and righteous or virtuous. There, it is clearly expounded that when the rulers are just, everyone becomes just; even planets, stars, wind, day and nights, deities, climate become regular, and crops become healthy and in abundance. Ultimately human beings become healthy, energetic, just, and live a long life.⁴²

2.9.4. *Vanaropa Sutta*⁴³

In *Vanaropa Sutta*, the Blessed One explains, “Those who set up a park, or a grove, construct a bridge, a well for people to drink and provide residence; for them merit increases day and night, will go to heaven and be established in *Dhamma* and endowed with virtue”⁴⁴.

Besides all the teachings mentioned above, the Buddha has given many other relevant discourses addressing essential aspects related to peace and sustainable development as follows: Good governance is the foundation for lasting peace and sustainable development. The Buddha’s teachings encompass a wide range of topics related to good governance, including the conduct of the rulers, the role of spiritual masters, the ethical guidelines for various members of the society, from businesspeople to civil servants. The five precepts as taught by the Buddha (avoiding from any kinds of harm to living things, theft of all kinds, sexual misconduct, lying/gossip, and use of intoxicants) offer a foundation for good governance, if followed by all. The *Dasa Rāja Dhamma*⁴⁵, or Ten Royal Virtues, represent the Buddhist ideal of good governance. These virtues are generosity, morality, sacrifice, honesty, kindness, self-restraint, non-hatred, non-violence, patience, and non-opposition/non-enmity⁴⁶.

Beyond the *Dasa Rāja Dhamma*, Buddhist teachings emphasize the four immeasurables (*catubrahmavihāra*), those qualities, if practiced by the people, will certainly ensure good governance. Those qualities are loving kindness (*mettā*) towards all beings, compassion (*karuṇā*) for the vulnerable, empathic joy (*mudita*) for the success of others and equanimity (*upekkhā*), balanced and impartial perspectives towards everyone. Consistent practice of these principles would foster peace and good governance, paving the path for the sustainable development within a nation and also in the world.

The *Sigālovāda Sutta* (DN 31) further emphasizes the rights and responsibilities of individuals within families and various societal relationships. Buddhist literature offers numerous examples of the Buddha’s previous lives as the Bodhisattva. The *Jātaka* tales depict him in various roles, just to name a

⁴² *Adhammika Sutta* (AN)-VRI.10.70, p. 45-46, accessed on [January 17, 2025] available at: www.tipitaka.org).

⁴³ *Vanaropan Sutta*, SN 1.7: (Translation adapted from Bhikkhu Bodhi-accessed on [February 10, 2025], available at: <http://suttacentral.net/sn1.47/en/bodhi>).

⁴⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi (Translation), accessed on [January 17, 2025], available at: <http://suttacentral.net/sn1.47/en/bodhi>

⁴⁵ *Mahahamsajataka*, Jataka-534, Jatakapi, KN.

⁴⁶ Dunda Bahadur Bajracharya (2011), *The Jataka* (Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births in Nepali Bhasha language), vol-V, p. 239-259-22, Tripitak Translation Board, Lalitpur.

few: a king (Janasandha Jātaka), a businessman (Servānija Jātaka), a monkey (Mahākapi Jātaka), a teacher (Sukhavhāri Jātaka), a peacock (Mora Jātaka)⁴⁷. In each of those lives, he taught valuable lessons on true Dhamma leading towards peace and prosperity.

III. Conclusion

Sustainable development represents a vital pathway to harmonizing human progress with the preservation of our planet's ecosystems and resources. By prioritizing the balanced integration of economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship, societies can address pressing challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and inequality. This approach demands collective actions: governments, businesses, communities, and individuals must collaborate to adopt innovative solutions, from renewable energy and circular economies to inclusive policies and education.

While obstacles like short-term economic interests and political inertia persist, the urgency of global crises underscores the need for unwavering commitment. Embracing sustainability is not merely an ethical imperative but a practical necessity to ensure resilience, equity, and a thriving future for generations to come. By redefining progress through the lens of sustainability, humanity can forge a world where prosperity coexists with ecological integrity, leaving no one behind.

Conflict and violence stem from negative emotions like anger, hatred, greed, and resentment. While many peace-building approaches acknowledge this, they often lack practical methods for addressing these root causes. Buddhist teachings offer valuable resources for cultivating empathy and inner peace. The Buddha's concept of dependent origination explains how observing sensations and understanding suffering, non-self, and impermanence can lead to inner peace. He taught *vipassanā* meditation to eradicate negative emotions, resulting in true inner peace and equanimity, which naturally manifests as loving-kindness.

The *Tipiṭaka* contains practical teachings for individual and universal peace and prosperity. The Buddha's six principles of cordiality⁴⁸ promote love, respect, and unity, preventing disputes, which the enlightened one taught with the *Sārāṇiya-dhamma Sutta* (Conditions for Amiability). The *Satta Aparihāniya, Dhamma* outlines seven sets of practices for maintaining peace, prosperity, order, and security within a society or nation.⁴⁹ The *Kūṭadanta Sutta*⁵⁰ emphasizes the importance of both material (economy, politics, society) and spiritual (generosity, moral conduct, meditation) development

⁴⁷ Dunda Bahadur Bajracharya (2011), *The Jataka* (Stories of the Buddha's Former Births in Nep.al Bhasha language), vol. I – VI, Tripitak Translation Board, Lalitp.ur.

⁴⁸ The Dalai Lama; Bodhi Bhikkhu, *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of discourses from the Pāli Canon* (Teachings of the Buddha), p. 131-132, Wisdom Publications.

⁴⁹ *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16).

⁵⁰ *Kūṭadanta Sutta*; (DN 5), accessed on [January 17, 2025], available at: VRI,p.120-www.tipitaka.org

for a peaceful society.

Throughout his teachings, the Buddha addressed inclusive social and community development, practicing equal treatment for all, regardless of social standing, gender, or caste. This article argues that community development initiatives incorporating Buddhist teachings can achieve more just, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes, enabling participation, suffering eradication, and happier lives. The Buddha rejected hierarchy, teaching that outcasts are defined by actions, not birth, and that liberation is possible for everyone. These democratic values of non-discrimination, inclusion, gender equality, and human rights were revolutionary in the Buddha's time. Integrating these values into community development policies and implementation can guarantee inclusion, sustainability, and social justice. The *Vasala Sutta* and *Mallika Sutta* mentioned earlier in this paper are particularly relevant for all-inclusive and socially just sustainable development.

Development practices are meant to eradicate poverty of the communities, leading them towards happier lives. In a way, it is also meant to eradicate suffering. As B. R. Ambedkar had said, "suffering is also caused by unequal/discriminatory social conditions besides desire/ attachment. There might be circumstances in which there are innocent victims. There are children or whole communities who are marginalized and oppressed by social, political, and economic forces that are essentially beyond their control, unless they organize a resistance to oppression"⁵¹. B. R. Ambedkar essentially indicates various forms of discrimination and non-inclusion of the marginalized groups. He succeeded in writing the constitution of India, the largest democracy in the world, which is regarded as one of the most inclusive constitutions.

As the major objectives of any development interventions are also eradication of suffering (poverty), Buddha's teachings, well-practiced, will certainly contribute towards attaining inclusive development guaranteeing social justice and sustainability. The Buddha, in his first discourse of the four noble truths, has taught the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of causes of suffering, the Truth of Cessation of Suffering, and the eightfold Noble path to eradication of suffering. This simile can be adapted to all kinds of suffering, material as mental suffering.

P. A. Payutto (1994), in his book *A Middle Way for Marketplace* emphasizes that economic growth should not only be based on competition, but also on cooperation.⁵² He also reiterates that satisfaction can be gained from work done to meet the requirements of well-being and not by the work done just for the sake of earning money.

⁵¹ Christopher Queen (1998), *A Fourth Turning of the Wheel, Ambedkar Buddhism, Insight Journal*. Massachusetts: Barre Center of Buddhist Studies.

⁵² P. Prayudh Aryankura Payutto (1994), *A Middle Way for Market Place*. Bangkok: Buddha Dhamma Foundation.

Many environmental hazards are human-made due to greed, such as overexploitation and unsustainable practices in farming and animal husbandry. The Five Precepts offer solutions to these issues. Mindfulness, a core Buddhist principle, promotes ethical actions that avoid harming nature and causing environmental degradation. Practicing the Five Precepts addresses not just the physical environment but also the mental and spiritual, creating a more peaceful atmosphere.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink are the formula, today the whole world is advocating to address the challenges posed by the environment. This can be understood as useless, produce less waste, use things more than just once, put the products to new use instead of throwing them away, and be mindful of our behaviour in relation to nature, do not overexploit natural resources. The teaching on how the old robes were recycled gives a marvelous example regarding this.

To achieve sustainable development free from corruption, hatred, violence, and injustice, Buddhist education should be integrated into schools, colleges, universities, and public service training. Integrating Buddhist teachings into the education system from an early age can positively impact not only the environment but all aspects of life. Policymakers and managers should be educated in these principles and incorporate them into policy-making and development programmes for more environmentally friendly and socially beneficial outcomes. A key reason for the ineffectiveness of many development programmes is their non-inclusive nature.

Discrimination based on caste, creed, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, or location prevents true sustainable development. The Buddha taught extensively on equality, non-discrimination, and participation for all. The Buddhist *saṅgha* provides a model for just and inclusive community management and development practices. Development practices aim to alleviate poverty and suffering, leading communities to happier lives. The Four Noble Truths apply to both material and mental suffering. Educating people from all walks of life in the Buddha's teachings can create positive change. Development policymakers and implementers should be trained in these teachings and incorporate them into policies and strategies for truly inclusive and sustainable community development. Through dedicated practice of the *Dhamma*, one can achieve peace and prosperity not only in this life but also the ultimate peace and prosperity: Nirvana.

It is worth mentioning here that the teachings of the Blessed one (*Dhamma*) is clearly expounded, can be experienced by oneself, giving results here and now, inviting one to come and see, leading straight to the Goal (liberation), and can be realized by any intelligent person⁵³ as mentioned in the following *Pāli* verse: *svākkhāto*⁵⁴ *bhagavata dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opanayiko*

⁵³ Madan Ratna Manandhar (2020), *Buddha Pujā*, Kathmandu: Bhajuratna-Astamaya Smriti P.rakashan, p. 14.

⁵⁴ *Sunakkhattavattthu*, VRI, p. 2.

paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhīti.

The majority of people and the policy makers, environmental scientists, are not yet aware of these teachings that are homegrown and suitable for our nation. One of the most profound teachings of the Buddha is Mindfulness. Just by being mindful of thoughts and deeds, one will be able to act ethically without harming nature.

It would be highly commendable to integrate the precious teachings by the Buddha in the education system right from the beginning; this will certainly make a difference, not only to the environment, but to all the other aspects of life. The policy makers and managers of all walks of life must also be educated in this regard. Incorporating those teachings, while making policies, designing, and implementing various development programmes, will certainly foster inclusive economic growth while at the same time ensuring environmental protection.

By educating people from all walks of life, age in all places will certainly make a difference. The policy makers and implementers of development interventions must also be trained on the practice of Buddha's teachings and incorporating them in the policies and strategies, only then an inclusive community development could be achieved that would guarantee sustainable peace. This will lead societies, nations and the whole world towards a state of more inclusivity, just happiness, more peace and more prosperity. Everyone will be equally able to participate and benefit from development approaches leading towards world peace and sustainability. This will certainly guarantee sustainable development, ensuring peace, unity, inclusivity, and human dignity.

Through determined practice of the true *dhmma* as taught by the Buddha, one will not only attain peace and prosperity in this world, but one can actualize the highest level of peace and prosperity: the nirvana, the complete liberation. Following verses from the *Dhammapada* explain the importance of equanimity and encourage us to rise above the feeling of hatred, victory, and defeat; only then can the true peace and prosperity be acquired.

*Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanaṃ;*⁵⁵

Averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano.

"Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law"⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ *Dhammapada Verse 5, Kalayakkhini Vatthu*, accessed on [February 12, 2025], available at: <http://www.tip.itaka.net/tip.itaka/dhp./verseload.p.hp.?verse=005>.

⁵⁶ *Dhammapada Verse 5, Kalayakkhini Vatthu*, accessed on [February 12, 2025], available at: <http://www.tip.itaka.net/tip.itaka/dhp./verseload.p.hp.?verse=005>.

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AI tools for paraphrasing.

Vipassana Research Institute (VRI).

WORLD PEACE CAN ONLY BEGIN WITH A UNIT OF INNER PEACE

Jai Singh*

Abstract:

Lord Buddha taught that a peaceful mind makes the body, speech, and actions peaceful. Only when the minds of living beings are peaceful in a single form will the world be peaceful. Most of us live in a state of mental turmoil that is peaceful only for brief and precious moments. One of the problems of modern society is that the actions we take are often indirect, not immediately visible to us, whether they are weak or strong! The question arises, whose mind is peaceful? When we buy meat wrapped in plastic in the supermarket, we are as responsible for the death of the animals as we are for killing and eating them ourselves. We are responsible for poisoning the environment with the chemicals we pour down our drains or the industries we work for or whose products we buy, as if we poisoned their food. So, peace is indivisible, but danger remains everywhere. Buddhism sees peace as an inner state of mental peace. This kind of knowledge is gained from the teachings of the Buddha. This inner peace radiates outward. The technique of meditation and *vipassanā* meditation taught by the enlightened man Buddha in ancient India spread throughout the world. Even today, people from different communities, traditions and religions come to meditation and learn this technique to gain the same benefits. They may call themselves Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, or Christians. Finally, having developed a Buddhist theoretical framework for understanding the nature of the problem and its solution, we can try to apply the basic principles in search of concrete applications that we can put into practice in our daily lives.

Keywords: *enlightenment, meditation, environmental poisoning, inner peace.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing influence and relevance of Buddhism in a global society has given rise to a vibrant and growing movement, especially in the West, loosely called socially engaged Buddhism. Today, many people are drawn to Buddha's

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teachings as an end to all problems. Many look to Buddhism for answers to one of the most important issues of the time - the elimination of discrimination against women.

There is general agreement that Buddhism itself has a reformist agenda or explicit feminist doctrine.¹ Gross (1993) in her book *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* has conducted a critical and comprehensive study of all the main sects of Buddhism from an intercultural, religious, and feminist perspective, with her main aim being a feminist reappraisal of Buddhism by analyzing key Buddhist concepts and perspectives that shape its world view.² She and other fellow scholars are divided over whether there is a case for feminism in Buddhism, particularly in Theravada or early Buddhism, which was largely shaped by patriarchal attitudes, in contrast to later developments in the *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* traditions that were more favorable to women. While the perception among Western scholars has prevailed that Buddhism has no explicit feminist principles and thus the Buddha was the first social reformer, the mere fact that he included women in the monastic order was a revolutionary initiative at the time and would have generated considerable hostility in society and uneasiness in the male monastic communities as well. Gross writes that an in-depth exploration of Buddhism and gender began only in the 1980s, and he identifies four major areas that need further investigation.³

II. ROLE OF MEDITATION IN UNDOING CONDITIONING

There is no doubt that social and legal reforms are necessary at all levels and in all places to eliminate discrimination against women. However, Gross's 2013 paper emphasizes that it is a meditation that can ultimately uproot the innate conditioning of both the oppressors and the oppressed with regard to harmful gender stereotypes and discrimination. As Gross (1993) states,⁴ *Dharma* is neither male nor female and what is needed is an androgynous approach that includes men, women, transgender and intersex people, which is also reflected in the two truths in Buddhism - the concept of gender exists only

¹ Sirimanne, Chand R. (2016). Buddhism and Women - The Dhamma Has No Gender. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 18(1), 273-292.

² Gross, R.M. (1993), *Buddhism after patriarchy: a feminist history, analysis, and reconstruction of Buddhism*. State University of New York Press, viewed 12 May 2015.

http://www.khamkoo.com/uploads/9/0/0/4/9004485/rita_m._gross_buddhism_after_patriarchy_a_feminist_history_analysis_and_reconstruction_of_buddhism_1992.pdf.

³ Gross, R.M. (1993), *Buddhism after patriarchy: a feminist history, analysis, and reconstruction of Buddhism*. State University of New York Press, viewed 12 May 2015.

http://www.khamkoo.com/uploads/9/0/0/4/9004485/rita_m._gross_buddhism_after_patriarchy_a_feminist_history_analysis_and_reconstruction_of_buddhism_1992.pdf.

⁴ Gross, R.M. (1993), *Buddhism after patriarchy: a feminist history, analysis, and reconstruction of Buddhism*. State University of New York Press, viewed 12 May 2015.

http://www.khamkoo.com/uploads/9/0/0/4/9004485/rita_m._gross_buddhism_after_patriarchy_a_feminist_history_analysis_and_reconstruction_of_buddhism_1992.pdf.

in the mundane world and truth and not in the supernatural truth. *Theravāda* Buddhism is not interested in reproduction or sexuality.

Theravāda Buddhists are mentally castrated bulls. De Silva AL (2003)⁵ discusses *Theravāda's* implicit approach to LGBT sexuality, stating that the same rules apply for heterosexual misconduct - intention (consciousness) is as paramount as always. He also points out that the same prohibitions apply to heterosexual misconduct (sex with underage people, prisoners, and other helpless people). Thus, gender does not play a very important role in the context of Buddhism, as the rules of the Vinaya apply equally to men and women.

Employment segregation - the unequal distribution of female and male workers across and within job types - is often at the heart of gender differences in job quality, pay, and employment trajectories. Employment segregation carries significant costs to the economy, particularly in countries facing demographic crises, talent shortages among job applicants, or a growing proportion of households in which women are the main breadwinners. Nevertheless, employment segregation appears to be resilient to economic growth and market forces, and it exists in developed and developing countries alike (Eliana et al. 2023).

Buddhism promotes the equality of men and women, and there are many examples of this in the Buddha's teachings and Buddhist practices. Equality of status The Buddha taught that men and women are equal, regardless of their status, race, ethnicity, or gender. He also believed that women were capable of achieving the same spiritual development as men, including becoming saints.

- (1) Educational opportunities: Buddhism does not restrict women's educational opportunities.
- (2) Religious freedom: Buddhism does not restrict women's religious freedom.
- (3) Leadership roles Women were given opportunities to become leaders and gain independence from men.
- (4) Female monastic community The Buddha established the first female monastic community in the world, which has existed for more than 2600 years.
- (5) *Bhikkhuni*, the Buddhist texts record 73 celebrated saint *bhikkhunis* who were scholars and experts in preaching the *Dhamma*. Buddhist feminism is a movement that seeks to improve the religious, legal, and social status of women within Buddhism. The Buddha taught that a peaceful mind leads to peaceful speech and peaceful actions. If the minds of living beings are peaceful, the world will be peaceful.

⁵ De Silva, A.L. (2003), *Homosexuality and Theravada Buddhism* [pdf], BuddhaNet, accessed 5 Dec 2015. Buddha Dharma Education Association 1996-2012, <http://www.buddha-net.net/homosexu.htm>.

Because most of us live amid a mental whirlpool that is quiet only for brief and precious moments. We can probably count on the fingers of both hands the number of those rare, holy individuals whose minds are truly, permanently at peace. If we wait for all beings in the world to become sages, what chance do we have of a peaceful world? Even if our minds are not completely at peace, is there any possibility of reducing the level of violence in the world and successfully dampening the winds of war?

This issue was discussed at the world level. Rulers resorted to war. Finally, tired of defeat, religious leaders were contacted and in the conferences of world religious leaders, the Buddha's teaching was considered paramount for world peace. Why was it considered paramount? To answer these questions, let us first look at the Buddha's view of the world, including the causal nature of its operation. Then, in that context, we can explore the causes of war. When the causes are identified, the Buddha's suggestions for dealing with and eliminating them can be discussed. Finally, having developed a Buddhist theoretical framework for understanding the nature of the problem and its solution, we can try to apply the basic principles in search of concrete applications that we can actually put into practice in our daily lives. One of the problems of modern society is that the karma we generate is often indirect, and we do not immediately sense its consequences, even if it is quite powerful. When we buy meat wrapped in plastic in the supermarket, we are just as responsible for the death of animals as we would be if we had killed them ourselves. We are just as responsible for poisoning people's environment by the chemicals we pour down our drains or by the industries we work for or whose products we buy as if we had personally poisoned their food. Likewise we may not be directly aware of how we are supporting the many conflicts and wars around the world. Of course, doing something wrong, even knowing it is wrong, is far worse than doing it in ignorance. These facts were made clear by (Ron Epstein 1988)⁶ in his research that ignorance does not absolve us of guilt. It is important to learn what the Buddha said about peace, justice, and freedom, especially in the troubled modern world. The concept of peace is central to Buddhism. Hence, the Buddha is called the King of Peace. To lead a Buddhist lifestyle is to live a harmonious, untroubled good life, which includes *Samācāra*, which literally means a harmonious life or a peaceful way of being with your fellow beings.

It is this principle that gives inner peace that allows one to live a harmonious or righteous life outwardly (*Dhammācariya*). This is what the Buddha, for the first time in human history, told the whole world when he established the Kingdom of Righteousness (*Dhammacakka*), which literally means the rule of righteousness. The Buddha, having immense compassion for the world, asked his followers to practice the four boundless states (*Apamāṇṇa*) - *Mettā*, *Karuṇā*, *Muditā*, and *Upekkhā*.

⁶ Epstein, R. (1988). *Buddhist Ideas For Attaining World Peace* (Lectures for the Global Peace Studies Program, San Francisco State University, November 7 & 9, 1988)

This practice of *mettā*, or universal love, begins by filling one's mind with universal love (*Mettā*) and then extending it to one's family, then neighbors, then village, country, and the four corners of the universe. The concept of peace is expressed by the word *shānti* in both ancient and modern Indian languages. Since peace is described in Buddhist literature as the ideal state of man, Buddhism has made peace a goal throughout its long history. Shakyamuni Gautama, the Buddha, regretted that the peaceful life of ordinary people was seriously damaged due to the conflicts between various kingdoms that occurred during the rise of Buddhism. In *Majjhima Nikāya*, people want wealth, and kings want to expand their territories.⁷ Elsewhere, kings desire to start wars and torment ordinary people with disasters and damage.⁸ When maintaining peaceful dialogue between two realms, there is always something to be resolved. Such ideals need to be realized to some extent. An Indian monk known as Gunavarman visited China in the early days Chinese king asked him what should be done when foreign armies were about to invade my country. If we fight, there will be many casualties. If we do not repel them, my country will be in danger. O Guru, please tell me what I should do. The monk replied Just keep a compassionate mind, not a hurtful mind. The king implemented his advice. When flags were hoisted and drums were played, the enemies retreated.⁹ The above passage does not teach us to fight the enemies. They do not teach us to deliberately retreat. But what should we do when the enemies invade the country? That is the first duty a king should perform: to protect the country. Otherwise, at such times the enemies take advantage of the peaceful attitude of the king. There may be rebellion. The concept of peace is defined and understood in various ways.

Understanding peace as the absence of violence is a limited vision. Peace includes happiness and harmony among living beings. In a broader understanding, peace is the nature and goal of every sentient being. Being peaceful teaches one to live in friendship with oneself and with every being. Buddhism sees peace as an inner state of mental calm that radiates outward. Achieving a state of inner peace can be an inspiration for everyone. The Buddha achieved inner peace through the practice of meditation, which inspired him to work for world peace. In most of his teachings, the Buddha emphasized that the practice of *Vipassanā* uproots mental disorders, which, according to him, are the cause of suffering and restlessness. Once a person overcomes suffering, he realizes inner peace. Inner peace projects itself outward, towards family, friends, and the larger society. It ensures peace and harmony in the outer world. Thus, world peace can be achieved through inner peace. Thus, Buddha became a source of inspiration for the entire humanity by achieving peace of mind.

⁷ *Majjhima Nikāya*, Vol. II, p.72.

⁸ Ven. Dr. Sumedh Thero. (2017). *Train chitta as per Buddhism for ecological balance*. Proc. Int Conf. Buddhism, Traditions, Ideologies and Dissent, September 7-9, 2017, Gautam Buddha University, NOIDA, India, p.74.

⁹ Taishō, Vol.50, p. 340b. *Taishō Tripitaka Index of Titles*.

Sharma (2020), in his research, observed what Buddha said about this and explained how mental disorders can be eradicated, how a person finds peace of mind, and how inner peace can lead to world peace.¹⁰ Inner peace is the key to world peace as it allows people to reach a peaceful place within themselves, which can lead to outer peace.

Here are some tips for developing inner peace:

- (1) Meditation - Quieting your mind to connect with the present moment and accept what is happening around you.
- (2) Breathing - Deep breathing can help develop inner peace.
- (3) Stretching - Stretching often can help develop inner peace.
- (4) Eating well - Eating well can help develop inner peace.
- (5) Getting enough sleep - Getting enough sleep can help develop inner peace.
- (6) Quiet time - Giving yourself quiet time every day, even for a few minutes, helps develop inner peace.
- (7) Facing problems - Facing them instead of trying to avoid or deny them helps develop inner peace.

Some other actions that can help bring peace to the world include educating yourself about peace, saying no to violence, practicing understanding and solidarity, reporting bullying and harassment, opposing inequality and discrimination, embracing inclusion and diversity, supporting peace Support advocates, and following trusted news sources. Various research and texts have proven that Buddhism has long been associated with inner peace and world peace. Every image or statue of Buddha sitting in meditation inspires harmony and peace.

Buddhism is considered to be a pioneer in the history of peace studies in the academic field. *Ahiṃsā* (non-violence) is the first precept for any person who is willing to practice Buddhism. In the authentic texts of Buddhism, Gautam Buddha asks his awakened disciples to go to places and spread the message of peace and nonviolence. A lot of research has been done to explore the connection of Buddhism with peace. That is why schools and colleges in many countries globally have included Buddhism in their academic curriculum. However, most people are still far from finding peace of mind and are victims of a lot of violence in society. Thus, this research attempts to bridge this gap, at least in the conceptual framework. When we talk about world peace, we often overlook the basic truth that true peace in the world is possible only when a person experiences peace within himself. Inner peace is reflected by a calm mind, clear thinking, lightness of feelings, a healthy body, a heart open to service, and kindness in our actions. Aggressive behavior is characterized by intense anger or rage. Some examples of aggressive behavior are being extremely angry

¹⁰ Sharma, Netra P. (2020). *From Inner Peace to World Peace: Buddhist Meditation in Practice*. *Journal of International Affairs*, 3, 132-144.

at someone, being angry about the way someone has treated you, and arguing furiously about a topic. Reasons behind aggressive behavior may include (but are not limited to) fear, anxiety, and stress. Unfulfilled physical needs (hunger, silence) or emotional needs (identity, love) traumatic experiences. Aggression is a common symptom of many mental disorders including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, Tourette's disorder (unwanted sounds (tics)), mood disorders (including bipolar disorder), substance-related disorders, alcohol-related disorders, mental retardation, pervasive.

When your anger flares, employ relaxation skills to ease the urge. Do deep breathing exercises, visualize a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase, such as Relax. Reciting the 84,000 Sutras preached by the Buddha has been found to be beneficial. Indian Sikhs calm their minds by chanting. You can also listen to music, write in a journal, newspaper etc., or do some yoga postures -whatever is needed to encourage relaxation. Psychosis refers to a collection of symptoms that affect the mind, where there is some loss of contact with reality. During an episode of psychosis, the person's thoughts and perceptions are disrupted, and they may have difficulty distinguishing what is real and what is not. Thus, the mentally ill person experiences changes in their sleep or appetite. Dramatic changes in sleep and appetite or decline in personal care. Mood changes. Rapid or dramatic changes in emotions or depressed feelings, more irritability. Thus, inner peace refers to a consciously pursued state of calmness, happiness, and contentment in everyday life. It is a state of comfort with yourself and with the things or situations around you, accepting yourself and the world the way it is, without expectation, judgment, resistance, or complaint.

It is an eternal feeling, an inner state of mental, emotional, and spiritual ease. It allows you to see inside your mind. Alison Rendall 2023)¹¹ explained that some synonyms for furious include frustrated, angry, fierce, frenzied, frenzied, furious, and violent. Some possible causes of aggressive behavior include biological factors, such as genetics, hormones, neurotransmitters, and medications; psychological factors; socioeconomic status; stress; fear; feeling like you are losing control; frustration; feeling abused; and feeling unheard. If someone is curious, they should not be furious. Empower children to take responsibility for their minds and behavior. In furious, not curious, you begin to sway and sway with the rhythms of nature. However, this is not a state of inactivity and certainly does not make your life dull. On the contrary, it makes you more alive, joyful, aware, content, and filled with positive emotions. You will prefer to respond to situations mindfully rather than react unconsciously. Your relationship with yourself, your family, your friends, and the people around you will start improving. All this leads to better health, more happiness,

¹¹ Rendle, A. (2023). *Curious Not Furious: Empowering children to take charge of their brains and behaviour - a practical toolkit*. Ember Press. The Stables, Park Farm Kings Lane, Cowfold, Horsham, West Sussex, United Kingdom, RH13 8BD

better relationships, and a peaceful, long life. So, it is very clear that if you want to live a blissful life, inner peace is a prerequisite. Yet, to achieve this state of ease and experience inner peace, it is important to do the following few exercises.

Avoid overthinking unnecessarily or exaggerating the past. Unpleasant situations, conversations, or mistakes will lead to guilt and regret. Instead, it is better to learn from past mistakes and move on. Buddha believed that always live in the present - just try to live each moment, every single day, in the best possible way, without wasting your time, effort, and energy thinking about the past or worrying about the future. Practice acceptance. Accept yourself and the world around you as it is without resistance or judgment, accept and appreciate the differences between people, this will make life easier and as a result, you will become peaceful. Practice forgiveness. We all make mistakes; to err is human, and no one is perfect, but forgiving yourself and others for imperfections and mistakes will benefit you more than anyone else! Experience freedom. Find freedom from guilt, worry, regret, and stress. It is priceless, but we give it up for many little things in life. Yet, it is essential for inner peace. Have confidence. Believe that you will be able to move forward despite the difficulties you face and that your life will be reasonably good. Confidence makes you feel strong and keeps you comfortable. Confidence is the key to success in life. It gives you the courage to face the world and find your way.

This confidence brings peace and comfort. Be resilient. Resilience is the ability to pull yourself together and bounce back despite facing disappointment, rejection, crisis, or failure. Such a person has an internal locus of control and sees the world more objectively. He does not blame the world for everything that has gone wrong in his life but rather takes responsibility for whatever happens and believes that he can do better next time and will not make the same mistake. Resilient people are often in a state of peace and inner calm. Arlin (2024) explained that the best way to stop overthinking conversations is to focus on the present moment.¹² Actively listening to the other person is a way to focus on the conversation rather than your thoughts.

Train constantly, and you will see changes. This training method seems to be a lesson for beginners. But we can train in this way constantly, at all times and in every situation, by visualizing a clear, bright crystal ball and silently repeating the mantra continuously until it becomes second nature. This is what Buddhist monks are taught in training. You will find that you are discovering something wonderful, that you are noticing changes in your body and mind, that you are seeing the gradual beginning of good physical and mental development. Even if you do not feel these results in a day or two, continue your efforts. You must continue your efforts, just as you are planting a tree. The seed will germinate, and from a small plant, it will become a full-fledged mature tree. This process is gradual, it requires time. We cannot determine its progress by measuring how many centimeters the tree grows every day. In this way, inner peace will spread

¹² Cuncic, A. (2024). *How to stop overthinking conversations (mistakes to avoid)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aboutsocialanxiety.com/how-to-stop-overthinking-conversations/>

out and become outer peace - the many thoughts swirling around will dissolve until only one thought remains. And finally, your feelings become one with the light of the bright crystal ball at the center of your body. When this happens, you will find pure happiness and peace. It will be a happiness that you can find on your own. And it is a happiness that anyone can achieve, regardless of one's ethnicity, language, location, or religion. It is a universal human happiness. It is happiness that one does not need to seek or pursue from external factors. It is essential that all human beings have one body and one mind. As soon as a person begins to practice, he will begin to know his mind and learn to control the mind so that it displays beauty and proper qualities. In addition, you will be able to understand the feelings of others and learn to control your desires.

And you will be able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. And if people in your family, society, or anywhere in the world practice as explained, they will all be able to say to themselves that this is true happiness. What is called inner peace will surely create outer peace, a pure peace that cannot come from using weapons or winning a war.

Luang Phaw says the human mind can be the starting point of both war and peace. If the mind is in turmoil caused of greed, anger, or delusion, emotions that cause conflict will arise. All the wars and battles of any kind that erupt from the barrels of guns around the world that have caused suffering to mankind arise from the fire found in people's minds. It is like the small flame of a burning matchstick that spreads to burn down an entire city. But when the human mind is calm and cool, full of consciousness and wisdom, endless happiness arises. The result is peace for individuals, families, communities, societies, nations, and the world. This is world peace that arises from inner peace. So the mind can only decide between world war and peace in the world.

Overthinking interactions is neurodivergence, which refers to the idea that the brain works differently than the norm. Some neurodivergent people may have difficulty with social communication, causing them to be overly analytical about their interactions with others. For example, people with autism spectrum disorder may struggle with nonverbal communication and social cues. They may also have difficulty processing social information, making it harder for them to understand social norms and nuances. This can force people with autism to spend a lot of time analyzing interactions with neurotypical people. Neurodivergent means having a brain that is formed or works differently. This non-medical term also means that neurodivergent people have different strengths. Neurodivergent people often experience unique emotional and behavioral symptoms, some common indicators of which include difficulty with social interactions, clumsiness, increased anxiety, etc. Neurodiversity, on the other hand, is a concept that embraces these diversities, claiming that conditions such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia, among others, are not disorders that need to be cured, but rather they are integral parts of human diversity. Some neurodivergent characteristics are seen in clusters of symptoms related to the way people communicate, think, feel, and interact. We can classify these differences into diagnostic categories

such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia. These differences can sometimes present challenges but can also contribute to incredible talents and abilities that most people do not have.

(Jodi, 2024) pointed out that sometimes when relationship partners have differences from each other, it can present challenges in communication and social expectations.¹³ Recognizing these differences is the first step towards mutual understanding and respect in a partnership. Inner peace is very important for global peace, but equally important is the concept of global peace, peace at the macro level, in the whole world. Once you are at peace with yourself, you can think about peace at a higher level. If more and more people in the world experience inner peace, personal relationships at home, offices, communities, nations, and across borders will be better because all kinds of discomfort, pain, and war start in the minds of individuals before they manifest in the world. So it is even more important to have peace within yourself. Moreover, inner peace will kindle better understanding, empathy, acceptance, patience, forgiveness, kindheartedness, and brotherhood among people, communities, and world leaders. So certainly, the foundation of peace will be laid across the broad spectrum of the universe! Global peace is the result of the collaborative efforts of many people within their respective capacities. Universal Peace and Peace are the main causes of global peace. Various global leaders and people are working for global peace by systematically resolving issues like global unrest, communal conflicts, ethnic, political, or religious clashes, terrorism, international crime, cross-border tensions, and wars. There is a need to develop a culture of love, acceptance, tolerance, social peace, co-existence, and international harmony. In our country, the philosophy of 'Olkdhakaso Dakvekdes' described in *Mahā Upaniṣad* and *Hitopadeśa* is considered an integral part of Hindu philosophy. It is a Sanskrit phrase that means that the whole world is one family, with brotherhood, peace, and harmony among people. So, by considering this philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and using the power of positivity, tolerance, and acceptance, we can make this world a better and better place to live in. Also, it is important to initiate global peace debates and organize interactive sessions, peace camps, and peace talks with stakeholders of society, diplomats, ambassadors, influential community groups, religious scholars, and community-based organizations across the world. This will not only create awareness about the importance of global peace but also empower these global peace ambassadors to find practical and implementable solutions.

This will not only create awareness about the importance of global peace but will also empower these Global Peace Ambassadors to find practical and implementable solutions to global challenges and promote resilience, inclusiveness, inter-religious harmony, and global peace. Also, derive and apply a scientifically validated approach that can be applied at the global level

¹³ Carlton, J. (2024). *How neurodivergent and neurotypical brains differ: A comprehensive guide for domestic partnerships*. Retrieved from: <https://jodicarlton.com/how-neurodivergent-and-neurotypical-brains-differ/>

to create and sustain world peace. So that the world can see a reduction in religious, political, and ethnic tensions, a reduction in terrorism, crime, and cross-border wars, and thus increase international cooperation and unity resulting in a peaceful world community and global peace!

The Buddhist path to world peace will certainly convert to inner peace, outer peace, and then world peace. A peaceful, loving heart creates a peaceful, harmonious world. It may sound simple, but it is indeed true. This observation points to something profound: There is no real world outside of our perception of the world. The world we see is viewed entirely through our lenses. So, if we change our minds, we truly change our world. Since our world is connected to the experiences of our family, friends, and the wider community, changing both our inner and outer worlds has the potential to have a profound impact on those around us. This is why an authentically peaceful world must begin with an authentically peaceful heart. In this timely half-day course, Kadam Morten will explore this essential topic through talk and guided meditation. He will introduce us to two special prayers composed by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso - the Prayer for World Peace and the Kadampa Prayer in Times of Tragedy. Understanding our power to influence and change our world is extremely uplifting. It enables us to let go of our helplessness and passivity in the face of suffering around us and instead empowers us to fully immerse ourselves in a process of inner and outer transformation.¹⁴ I think that if we want peace in human society, we cannot ignore individuals. If there is no peace in one's mind, I don't understand how there can be real peace in the world. If my mind is always disturbed, full of anger, hatred, ill will, and hostility, how can I let the world be at peace? Because I do not have peace. That is why enlightened persons have said, first, find peace within yourself. The individual has to check whether he has peace within himself. All the sages, saints, and seers of the world have advised: know yourself. This does not mean merely knowing at the intellectual level or accepting at the emotional or devotional level, but realizing by experience at the real level.

When you experience the truth about yourself, within yourself, at the experiential level, the problems of life are solved. You begin to understand the universal law, the law of nature - or, if you like, the law of the Almighty God. This law applies to everyone. When I generate anger, hatred, ill will, or malice, I am the first victim of my anger. I am the first victim of the hatred or animosity generated within me. First, I harm myself; only then do I start harming others. This is the law of nature. If I observe within myself, I find that as soon as any negativity arises in the mind, there is a physical reaction. My body becomes hot and starts burning, palpitations and tension. I am unhappy. When I generate negativity within myself and become unhappy, I do not limit the unhappiness to myself, rather, I pass it on to others. I make the whole environment around me so tense that whoever comes in contact

¹⁴ Gyatso, G. K. (2024). *The prayers for world peace, and the Kadampa prayer in times of tragedy*. Retrieved from: <https://meditationinnewyork.org/inner-peace-outer-peace-world-peace>

with me also becomes unhappy. Though I talk of peace and happiness, more important than words is what is happening within me. The moment there is no negativity left in the mind, nature or almighty God starts rewarding me. I feel peace. This, too I can see within myself. This is what is taught in Buddha's teachings of *Vipassanā* meditation! This technique, taught by the wise Buddha in India in ancient times, spread throughout the world. Even today, people from different communities, traditions, and religions come and learn this technique and receive the same benefits. They may call themselves Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, or Christians. These labels make no difference; human beings are human beings. The only difference is that through their practice they become true spiritual beings, full of love and compassion. What they are doing is good for them and for everyone. When a person creates peace in the mind, the whole atmosphere around that person is filled with the vibration of peace and anyone who meets that person also begins to enjoy peace. This mental change is the real conversion that is needed. Any other conversion has no meaning.

This technique, taught by the wise Buddha in India in ancient times, spread throughout the world. Even today, people from different communities, traditions, and religions come and learn this technique and receive the same benefits. They may call themselves Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, or Christians. These labels make no difference; human beings are human beings. The only difference is that through their practice they become true spiritual beings, full of love and compassion. What they are doing is good for them and for everyone. When a person creates peace in the mind, the entire atmosphere around that person is filled with vibrations of peace and anyone who meets that person also begins to enjoy peace. This mental change is the real conversion that is needed. Any other conversion has no meaning.

Allow us to give an altruistic message from India to the world. Carved on stone 2300 years ago, these words are those of Emperor Ashoka, an ideal ruler, describing how to rule. He tells us, one should not only respect one's religion but also condemn other religions. This is an important message for our times. By condemning others and insisting on his tradition of being the best, man creates difficulties for humanity. Instead, Ashoka adds, we should respect other religions for various reasons. Every religion worthy of the name has a healthy essence of love, compassion, and goodwill. Goenka (2000), in his address, explains that we should respect religion because of this essence.¹⁵ The outer form always varies. There will be great variations in rites, rituals, ceremonies, or beliefs. We should not quarrel about all these, but give importance to the inner essence. By doing so, Ashoka says, one helps his religion to develop and also serves the religions of others. By acting otherwise, one digs the grave of his religion and also harms other religions. This is a serious warning to all of

¹⁵ Goenka, S. N. (2000). *Millennium World Peace Summit on 29 August 2000 at the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.vridhamma.org/discourses/Inner-Peace-for-World-Peace>

us. The message says, if a person respects his religion and condemns other religions, he may do so because of devotion to his religion, thinking that he will glorify his religion, but his actions harm his religion more seriously. Finally, Ashoka's message of universal law presents the message of Dharma: Listen to all. Harmony is good, not quarrel. Everyone should be ready to listen to the doctrine told by others. Instead of disagreeing and condemning, we should value the essence of the teaching of every religion. Then, there will be real peace and real harmony. Shankar (2020) observed and highlighted that inner peace is the key to world peace- The theme of this year's International Day of Peace, Shaping Peace Together, is very apt.¹⁶ Peace is not just the absence of conflict or violence. It is a positive inner phenomenon. When we talk about world peace, we forget an essential truth. World peace or outer peace is impossible unless one is at peace with oneself. Inner Peace- Inner peace reflects a calm mind, sharp intellect, lightness and positivity in our emotions, a healthy body, a heart that is always ready to serve, and kindness in our behavior. Need for Ethics- To shape a peaceful world, it is time to move towards ethical values that form the basis of any human society. What is ethics? Do not do to others what you do not want to be done to you. If you do not want someone to disturb your practice, you should not disturb the practice of others. If you do not want someone to harm, you should not harm anyone else. We have to maintain our identity and, at the same time, respect the identity of others. From Inner Peace to Outer Peace- Inner peace is the key to world peace. If people can reach this peaceful place inside themselves, then outer peace can become a reality.

In this search for inner peace, knowledge of the true nature of the world helps - knowing that everything is going to change, and everything is changing. The awareness that one day everything is going to end can take you out of the worrying tendency of the mind. There have been so many things in the past, some pleasant and some unpleasant, and they are all gone. When you see that everything is changing, everything is disappearing, then you remain strong, yet gentle and centered.

The soul loves diversity - there is not just one kind of fruit, one kind of people, or one kind of animal on this planet. So do not limit the soul to one kind of diversity. Let us enjoy the diversity in creation by honoring, respecting, and loving all of them. We have been using the term 'religious tolerance' very often. I think these terms have become obsolete now. You tolerate only that which you do not love. Now is the time to love each other's religions as your own. Religion is not great just because it is mine. It is great because of what it is. This understanding, when inculcated in all those who lead people to spiritual and religious light, will end the fanaticism prevailing in our beautiful world. We need to educate. Buddha's teachings include the importance of taking care of animals and birds along with humans, feeding them fodder, grains, etc.

¹⁶ Shankar, Sri Ravi. (2020). *Inner peace is the key to world peace*. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/inner-peace-key-world-gurudev-sri-sri-ravi-shankar>

The soul loves diversity- there is not just one kind of fruit, one kind of people, or one kind of animal on this planet. So, let us not limit the soul to the same. Let us enjoy the diversity in creation by respecting, honoring, and loving all of them. We have been using the term 'religious tolerance' too often. I think these words have become obsolete now. You only tolerate what you don't like. It is time to love each other's religions as our own. Religion is not great just because it is mine; it is great because of what it is. This understanding, when inculcated in all those who lead people in the spiritual and religious light, will end the fanaticism that is going on in our beautiful world. We need to educate our people to understand a little bit about every other religion and culture so that a broader view of life can be adopted. Without meditation and universal brotherhood, which are the essence of spirituality, religion remains just an outer shell. All we need to do is find the reservoir of peace that is us. Peaceful people will create a peaceful, beautiful world where diversity is respected and kindness and service are valued. From Inner Peace to World Peace presents the authors' overall theme and intention. The subtitle, *A Spiritual Approach to Social Change*, describes how to achieve this remarkable goal. The principles taught in yoga, meditation, and other physical activities that are found in all wisdom traditions serve to provide a template in which contemporary social issues can be examined.

The premise is that we must increase our understanding of the root causes of social evils before we can hope to address them effectively (Bhavani & Kubel, 2014).¹⁷ Today, there are different sects of people and different species of life. If one group uses terrorism to prevent the practices of other groups, shouldn't the government surely intervene and protect the rights of all sects? If this does not happen and a sect of people is forcibly or illegally harassing others, then how can one focus on achieving inner peace?... Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji (2024) pointed out that if the environment to earn basic rights like food, air, water, shelter, soul enrichment practices, etc. is at stake, where is inner peace?¹⁸ World peace from inner peace? If people are peaceful from within, can it bring peace to the world? Is it practical? Think about it before you go deeper.

Weibel & Galtung (2007) found in their study that the concept of peace has been defined in various ways in academia.¹⁹ Perhaps peace is like happiness, justice, health, and other human ideals, something that every person and culture claims to desire and respect but which very few people, if any, can achieve, at least on a sustainable basis. Why are peace, justice, and happiness so desirable but at the same time so abstract and elusive? But, perhaps peace

¹⁷ Girard, B., & Kubel, S. (2014). *From Inner Peace to World Peace: A Spiritual Approach to Social Change*. Retrieved from: <https://www.amazon.in/Inner-Peace-World-Spiritual-Approach/dp/1497356784>.

¹⁸ Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji. (2024). *Global Spirituality Mahotsav Kanha Meditation Center*. Retrieved from: <https://chinnajeeyar.org/inner-peace-to-world-peace/>

¹⁹ Weibel, C., & Galtung, J. (2007). *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. Routledge, London, p. 92.

is different from happiness, because it requires social harmony and political enfranchisement, while happiness, at least in Western culture, appears to be largely an individual matter.

Jotika & Dhamminda (1986) pointed out that peace is usually understood as the absence of hostility.²⁰ Social peace is often defined as the lack of conflict or violence in society. After overcoming ten years of political violence, Nepal has defined peace in its understanding. The resolution of existing class-based, ethnic, regional, and gender problems...leads to long-term peace. Full commitment to democratic norms and values, including competitive multiparty democratic governance, civil liberties, fundamental rights, human rights, full press freedom, and the concept of the rule of law is the path to social peace (Comprehensive Peace Accord 2006).

According to the Buddha, the “only way” to achieve inner peace is the practice of *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* (tranquility and insight) meditation. “It is the only way to the purification of the mind of beings, overcoming suffering and lamentation, cessation of physical and mental suffering, the attainment of the noble paths, and the attainment of nirvana. That (the only way) is the four *satipatthanas*. On other occasions, the Buddha says, two things are conducive to wisdom: tranquility and insight. If tranquility is developed, what does it benefit? The mind is developed. If the mind is developed, what does it benefit? All passions are renounced. Nyanaponika and Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000), as the mind is freed from passions, an inner purification takes place. This purification of the mind is the basis for a state of tranquility.²¹ The Buddha uses peace and nirvana synonymously. He says in the *Dhammapada* (285), Just as a man plucks the autumn lotus with his hand, so cut off your affections.²² Only cultivate the path of peace, nirvana. If a person who is fully aware of the real benefits that can be gained is desirous of attaining and realizing peaceful and blissful nirvana, he should always involve himself in the practice of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (insight knowledge). He should be able to do this practice only by practicing *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (insight knowledge).

Buddha worked for peace till his last breath. A famous saying of Buddha from *Vinayapiṭaka*, *Mahāvagga*, represents Buddha’s concern for peace. “Charatha bhikkhave charikam bahujaṇa hitaya bahujaṇa sukhaya lokanukampaya, O bhikshus, for the good of many, for the happiness of many, go forth on your journey in compassion for the world”. Buddhism defines peace in its way. Buddhism believes that peace starts from within and extends to the outer society through the practice of compassion. By knowing impermanence,

²⁰ Jotika & Dhamminda. (1986). *Maha Satipatṭhāna Sutta: The Greater Discourse on Steadfast Mindfulness*. Migadavun, Myanmar, p. 45.

²¹ Nyanaponika Thera, & Bhikkhu Bodhi (Trans. & Ed.). (2000). *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Aṅguttara Nikāya*. New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, Sec. II, 2.7.

²² *Dhammapada*, verse 285, 195, 277.

suffering, and non-self, one's suffering gradually ends; as a result, one realizes inner peace. Quoted in *Dhammapada* (verse 195),²³ Buddha says, "All conditioned phenomena are impermanent; when one sees this with insight-wisdom, one is tired of suffering (i.e., *khandha*). This is the path of purity."²⁴ *Vipassanā* meditation helps a person achieve peace only if he practices it systematically. Knowing everything about meditation cannot help unless the person applies it in practical life. If a person only reads the recipe for making food, even if he understands all the words, he cannot get any taste or nutrition from it. In the same way, reading the principles or techniques of meditation will not help a person achieve peace.

By reading, one can achieve *Sutamayī Paññā*, i.e., knowledge obtained from outside. It cannot help a person achieve inner peace. To experience peace of mind, one has to achieve *Cintāmayī Paññā*, i.e., thinking, meditating, and analyzing the knowledge read in books. Finally, one has to achieve *Bhāvanāmayī Paññā*, i.e., knowledge gained from experience. *Vipassanā* meditation helps the practitioner to achieve *Bhāvanāmayī Paññā*, which is the source or origin of experiencing inner peace. The attainment of such knowledge begins with the exercise of mindfulness, i.e., *satipaṭṭhāna*.²⁵ The main practice of *Vipassanā* is mindfulness in four areas: mindfulness of the body (*kāyanupashyana*), mindfulness of the emotions (*vedanānupassanā*), mindfulness of the mind or consciousness (*cittānupassanā*), and mindfulness of the dhamma or phenomena (*dhammānupassanā*). While practicing *Vipassanā*, the practitioner is expected to constantly observe his sensory experiences in order to prevent cravings from arising, as they will power the future experience of rebirth.

Thus, *Vipassanā* helps the practitioner overcome mental disorders and achieve inner peace. And inner peace ultimately leads to world peace. An analysis of the four states of mind shows that the surest way to achieve inner peace is through the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation. The Buddhist way of meditation helps practitioners purify the mind by eliminating craving, hatred, and ignorance. During meditation, practitioners realize that things are impermanent and lead to suffering and turn away from themselves. Seeing things as they are is a great liberation. As soon as a person realizes inner peace, his suffering ends. He starts living in the four excellent states. This deepens the peace of mind. Thus practitioners devote themselves to creating harmony in society or world peace. Your brain is an organ that contains billions of neurons. These neurons communicate with each other using electrical impulses generated by neurotransmitters, which are brain chemicals. The electrical impulses generate measurable waves, and we can see their patterns

²³ *Dhammapada*, verse 285, 195, 277.

²⁴ *Dhammapada*, verse 285, 195, 277.

²⁵ Piyadassi. (1978). *Buddhist Meditation*. Taiwan: The Corporate body of Buddha Education Foundation.

Sayadwa, Mahasi. (1996-2012). *Brahmavihara Dhamma, Part III: The Mettā Sutta Paritta*. Retrieved from: <http://www.buddhanet.net/brahmaviharas/bvd039.htm>.

using a device called a brain monitor. Your thoughts, feelings, and behavior correspond to different brain wave patterns. These patterns also reveal whether you are a meditator and can indicate how long you have practiced meditation. Thus, the main practice of *Vipassanā* is to be mindful of four areas: mindfulness of the body (*kāyanupashyana*), mindfulness of the feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), mindfulness of the mind or consciousness (*cittānupassanā*), and mindfulness of dhamma or phenomena (*dhammānupassanā*).

When practicing *Vipassanā*, the practitioner is expected to constantly observe his sensory experiences in order to prevent cravings from arising, as they will power the future experience of rebirth. Modern means the conditions and ideas of the present age. Synonyms: contemporary world, modern times, present time. A more or less definite period that exists now or already. Globalization means the speed of movements and exchanges (humans, goods and services, capital, technologies, or cultural practices) across the planet. One of the effects of globalization is that it promotes and increases interactions between different regions and populations around the world. Multinationals such as Amazon, Google, Apple and Facebook are examples of transnational corporations that have not only benefited from globalization but are also one of the main engines of its success. Globalization is facilitated economically by free trade agreements, which allow barrier-free imports and exports across borders. While globalization brings many benefits - including lower prices and higher standards of living for some - it also has drawbacks, including the concentration of wealth and cultural homogeneity.

Happiness is usually associated with the concepts of life satisfaction and subjective well-being, which is the total score of the cognitive and affective components of a person's mental state. Therefore, the following definition of happiness refers to people's evaluation of their lives, which is both affective and cognitive.²⁶ For example, at the macro level, peaceful countries report higher levels of happiness in general. Similarly, an overview of the definitions related to peace and happiness makes their relationship quite clear. Some similarities between these concepts are included (Kohrs et al., 2013). According to the World Happiness Report, Finland is the happiest country in the world. It would be more accurate to say that Finland is the country with the least unhappy people in the world, Martela told BT Make It. The 10 unhappiest countries in the world have been revealed - and it's not good for the UK. And it's not the best news for the UK, with the UK coming in 20th on the list - behind Australia, Ireland and New Zealand: (1) Afghanistan, (2) Lebanon, (3) Lesotho, (4) Sierra Leone, (5) Congo (Kinshasa), (6) Zimbabwe, (7) Botswana, (8) Malawi, (9) Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland), (10) Zambia.

²⁶ Diener, E. (2000). *Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index*. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.55.1.34>

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THE CULTIVATION OF INNER PEACE IS INEVITABLE FOR WORLD PEACE: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE VIEW OF BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Shyamol Chowdhury*

Abstract:

This paper explores the Buddhist perspective on cultivating inner peace as a prerequisite for achieving world peace. Inner peace is a state of self-awareness, acceptance, and emotional balance, enabling individuals to navigate life's challenges with equanimity. Buddhism emphasizes that true peace arises from within and cannot be found in external circumstances. Through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and meditation, individuals can develop inner tranquility, reducing stress and conflict in both personal and societal contexts.

The study highlights the Buddhist concept of just peace, asserting that peace must be accompanied by justice, equality, and compassion. The principles of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (meditation), and *paññā* (wisdom) provide a practical path to fostering harmony. Additionally, the Four Brahmavihāras - loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity - play a crucial role in creating a culture of peace. The research also discusses the impact of Humanistic Buddhism and its emphasis on integrating spiritual wisdom with daily life to promote global harmony.

Ultimately, the paper concludes that world peace is unattainable without inner transformation. By practicing mindfulness, self-discipline, and compassion, individuals can create a ripple effect, inspiring broader social change. The path to a peaceful world begins with personal cultivation, making inner peace an inevitable foundation for global stability and harmony.

Keywords: *Buddhism, inner peace, world peace, mindfulness, equanimity, just peace, sīla, samādhi, paññā, four Brahmavihāras, Humanistic Buddhism, compassion.*

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I. COMMENCEMENT

Inner peace is a profound understanding and acceptance of oneself - one's thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It is a state of being in which one is at peace with who they are, where they are, and how they feel. Inner peace is a state of tranquility in which you feel at ease with yourself, others, and the world around you.

When you experience inner peace, you accept yourself fully – your strengths, flaws, desires, and dreams – everything that makes you uniquely you. You also develop a greater acceptance of the world around you and the unfolding of events, making you less negatively impacted by anxiety, worry, and stress. Inner peace is essentially equanimity in action. It is not about eliminating challenges or difficulties but about navigating through them with a tranquil and accepting mind.

In the pursuit of tranquility and serenity, individuals often find themselves searching in all the wrong places. The quest for inner peace frequently leads people to seek it in their external environment, material possessions, relationships, or societal validation. However, the secret to inner peace is not found in the outer world but within oneself. This exploration aims to delve into the concept of inner peace, its significance, and how one can cultivate it.

1.1. Objectives

The primary objective of this paper is to examine various studies on the Buddha's philosophy, world peace, and inner peace. This paper addresses the crises faced by humanity and society and explores how sustainable peace can be achieved through the practice of Buddhist teachings. I have attempted to explain that inner peace is essential for world peace. The concept of "world friendship" holds great significance in Buddhism, which is why every sentient being must strive to cultivate it in a Buddhist way to achieve harmony and peace.

1.2. Methodology

This study is based on Buddhist literary texts as primary sources and employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Additionally, various articles published in books, journals, websites, conference proceedings, and magazines have been carefully consulted. The study adheres to the standard convention of acknowledging sources and includes a bibliography for reference.

II. DISCUSSION

2.1. The significance of inner peace

Inner peace is not just a state of mind; it is a way of life and a crucial element of overall well-being. It promotes mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression while enhancing emotional stability and fostering feelings of happiness and contentment. Additionally, inner peace contributes to physical health by lowering the risk of stress-related diseases.

Moreover, inner peace fosters personal growth. It allows individuals to accept and embrace both their flaws and strengths, promoting self-awareness

and self-acceptance. It enables individuals to live in the present moment, appreciating the beauty of now rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

2.2. Where can I find inner peace

Inner peace is not something that can be found externally but cultivated within oneself. It involves acknowledging and accepting one's thoughts and emotions, living fully in the present, and adopting practices that nurture overall well-being. Achieving inner peace can be as simple as taking a few moments each day to focus on your breath, express gratitude, or enjoy a quiet walk in nature. Inner peace is, essentially, equanimity in action.

2.3. What is equanimity

Finding inner peace is not about brief respites from stress or fleeting moments of relaxation. Rather, it is a sustained state that can be maintained through equanimity. Equanimity is a skill that can be cultivated, enabling you to maintain a calm and balanced state of mind regardless of life's ups and downs. It allows you to be at peace not only when things are going well but also when challenges arise. Mindfulness is the key.

2.4. Mindfulness

Mindfulness practices can help you connect with your inner peace and perceive tough situations as manageable challenges. Mindfulness is the practice of maintaining a clear, focused awareness of moment-to-moment experiences in the here and now. It is the basic human ability to be fully present—aware of where we are and what we are doing—without becoming overly reactive or overwhelmed by our surroundings. Mindfulness can be cultivated through proven techniques, particularly seated, walking, standing, and moving meditation. Mindfulness is a concept that can be viewed in several ways, including as a mental training technique.

III. BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE OF PEACE

The purpose of Buddhism is to bring a peaceful and tranquil life to sentient beings who are practicing the Buddha's teachings properly to avoid unwholesome states of body, speech, and mind, and those who have the right understanding and balanced cognition.

3.1. Peace

I believe that peace is a fundamental and ultimate concern of Buddhism, both for the individual and for the communal or universal sphere. Buddhism has long been recognized as the most peaceful religion among world traditions. The history of the world shows that Buddhists have never waged war in the name of Buddhism since its founding by Sakyamuni Buddha, who taught non-violence and compassion to people, as well as to his disciples.

Followers of the Buddha – including *bhikkhus/ bhikkhunīs, sāmaṇeras/ sāmaṇerīs, bodhisattvas*, and lay Buddhists – are expected to observe various precepts depending on their level of practice. However, a fundamental precept that all Buddhists must uphold is to refrain from killing and harming any sentient beings. Respecting and caring for all living beings is a core doctrine of

Buddhism and a principal rule of conduct. The commitment to non-violence serves as the foundation of peace and justice within the Buddhist community and in society as a whole. It is clear that where killing, harm, hatred, or violence exists, peace cannot be found.

The *śīla* (moral precepts) and *vinaya* (monastic discipline) in Buddhism are established to prevent violence and conflict, both within the *Saṅgha* and in society. *Samādhi*, Buddhist meditation or concentration, helps to cultivate a calm and clear mind. It enables individuals to develop inner peace, compassion, wisdom, and justice.

It is well known that the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to attain *Nibbāna*, a state of complete peace and liberation from defilements and suffering. *Nibbāna* signifies the extinction of desire and *karma*, as well as supreme enlightenment with perfect wisdom. Therefore, it can be said that genuine Buddhists are seekers of peace, as they strive for *Nibbāna*, which embodies absolute peace and eternal happiness.

I believe that Buddhist peace and happiness, along with *Nibbāna*, offer the highest quality of peace compared to other religious or spiritual traditions. However, a significant challenge remains: how can *Nibbāna* be realized both individually and collectively in societies around the world? Creating a *Nibbāna*-inspired world – a completely peaceful globe – is a common goal and responsibility of all human beings. Thus, it is essential to share knowledge about *Nibbāna* and the path to achieving it with people in society. We need to engage in discussions and develop practical ways to integrate the pursuit of *Nibbāna* into a social context.¹

3.2. Peace and society

In modern society, peace has become a critical issue, closely linked with justice and the interdependent relationships within society. Therefore, peace should be just peace, as there are situations that may appear peaceful on the surface while unjust realities persist beneath them, often in the name of peace for political claims. Peace that coexists with injustice is not true peace; rather, it is superficial or nominal peace.

For the sake of sustainable peace, I would like to draw public attention to the concept of just peace rather than peace alone. Let us reflect on the denotation and connotation of the terms just and peace in a social context:² (1) Just can imply fairness, righteousness, truthfulness, morality, honesty, honor, impartiality, or equity. It can also suggest immediacy (e.g., now, recently, lately) or exclusivity (e.g., only, solely, barely, exactly, entirely, or perfectly). Additionally, it can indicate simplicity or clarity (e.g., simply, really, truly, clearly, or specifically); (2) Peace can imply calmness, quietness, stillness,

¹ Mattie J. T. Stepanek with Jimmy Carter, ed. by Jennifer Smith Stepanek, *Just Peace: A Message of Hope* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2006), xvi.

² Ven. Jinwol Dowon, ed. by Ven. Thich Nhat Tu & Ven. Thich Duc Thien, *Mindful Leadership for Sustainable Peace* (UNDV-2019 Journal), pp. 64.

tranquility, or silence. It can also represent harmony, serenity, concord, or amity. Furthermore, it can denote understanding, reconciliation, agreement, compromise, synchronization, goodwill, or positive relations. Additionally, peace may refer to a ceasefire, the end of war, freedom from strife, or the absence of violence.

I firmly believe that all these concepts are deeply interconnected and play a crucial role in our discussion on achieving true and just peace. Each idea contributes to a broader understanding of peace, justice, and harmony, reinforcing the importance of ethical principles, mindfulness, and compassionate leadership in fostering a sustainable and equitable world.

3.3. World peace

The fundamental goal of Buddhism is to cultivate peace throughout the world. The first step is to understand the causality of peace. A peaceful mind leads to peaceful speech and peaceful actions. If a person consciously chooses to be peaceful in all their interactions, they contribute to a culture of peace. However, achieving this is not easy – it requires effort, determination, patience, cooperation, and consistent practice. We have the ability to change our minds and perspectives, allowing us to become more peaceful. As a result, we can help strengthen peace in the world. For, in truth, there is no path to peace – peace itself is the path.

IV. HOW TO CULTIVATE INNER PEACE

Cultivating inner peace is a journey of self-exploration and self-acceptance. It begins with the understanding that peace comes from within and not from the external world. Here are some ways to cultivate inner peace:

(1) Self-awareness: The first step towards inner peace is self-awareness. It involves understanding one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It's about recognizing one's strengths, weaknesses, and triggers. Self-awareness allows individuals to understand their reactions to different situations and manage them effectively.

(2) Acceptance: Acceptance is a crucial aspect of inner peace. It involves accepting oneself, one's life, and one's circumstances. It's about embracing life's imperfections and finding contentment in them. Acceptance doesn't mean resignation or complacency; it means understanding that life is a mix of good and bad and finding peace in that understanding.

(3) Mindfulness: Mindfulness is the practice of living in the present moment. It involves focusing on the here and now rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Mindfulness promotes inner peace by reducing stress and anxiety, enhancing emotional stability, and promoting a sense of calmness and tranquility.

(4) Self-Care: Self-care is an essential part of cultivating inner peace. It involves caring for one's physical, mental, and emotional health. It includes activities like eating healthy, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, practicing relaxation techniques, and engaging in activities that bring joy and happiness.

V. BUDDHISM AND HUMAN WORLD

To be Buddhist means that while it exists within the human world, it does not stop there. Its ultimate goals are the liberation taught in Buddhism and the attainment of Buddhahood. In other words, while it is part of the world, it possesses the extra-worldliness that is a defining characteristic of Buddhism. It is not merely a worldly philosophy that caters to popular preferences while neglecting Buddhism's essence of supramundane deliverance. Buddhism extends beyond the human realm.

When we speak of Humanistic Buddhism today, we refer to the personal, appropriate, and practical study and practice of the *Dhamma* from a human standpoint.

The human world is mundane, while Buddhism is supramundane. Humanistic Buddhism represents a dialectical union of the mundane and the supramundane. With an extra-worldly attitude, we engage in worldly tasks. Without abandoning worldly responsibilities, we accomplish extra-worldly liberation. The human realm serves as the context for teaching and transformation, while Buddhism is the path that teaches and transforms. Humanistic Buddhism embodies the dialectical union of practice and principle.

If something aligns with the principles of Buddhism but does not fit within the circumstances of the human world, it is not Humanistic Buddhism. Likewise, if something resonates with human sentiments but fails to align with the truths of Buddhism, it is also not Humanistic Buddhism. The world represents the form, while Buddhism represents the substance. Humanistic Buddhism is the dialectical amalgamation of form and substance.

The human world is the starting point, and Buddhism is the destination.

5.1. Humanistic Buddhism

Grand Master Hsing Yun³ interpreted Humanistic Buddhism through the following six characteristics:

(1) Humanity: The Buddha was not a god but a fully human being, like all of us. He had parents, lived a family life, and experienced the human condition. Through his compassion, discipline, and profound wisdom, he demonstrated enlightenment within human life. Therefore, he is regarded as the Buddha in the world.

(2) Human Life: Buddhism, as initiated by the Buddha, places great importance on ordinary life, including food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. The Buddha provided a wide range of teachings on nearly all aspects of life, including family relationships, social interactions, and state affairs.

(3) Altruism: The Buddha's purpose in coming into the world was to teach sentient beings and to offer them guidance and benefits.

³ Hsing Yun, "On Humanistic Buddhism", in 1990 Fo Guang Shan Fochiao Hsuwhshu Huiyi Sh Ihlu, pp. 19 – 20.

(4) **Joyfulness:** The Buddhist teachings bring joy to people. Through his boundless compassion, the Buddha sought to relieve the suffering of all sentient beings so that they could experience true happiness.

(5) **Time Frame:** The Buddha arose in this world under specific conditions. His presence established a connection for the future liberation of all beings in the universe. Although he was born over 2,500 years ago and entered *Nibbāna*, his teachings continue to provide an opportunity for salvation for sentient beings across generations. We continue to take his wisdom and teachings as our guide.

(6) **Universality:** The Buddha's life embodied universality. Master Tai Xu stated that Buddhist doctrines encompass the past, present, and future, but the most significant aspect is the universality of the present.⁴ While Buddhism speaks of this world, the other world, and countless worlds, it places great emphasis on the universality of this world. When speaking about sentient beings, the Buddha emphasized the universality of humankind.

Grand Master Hsing Yun emphasized that all Buddhist traditions – regardless of how people categorize them into Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Exoteric, or Esoteric schools – are deeply rooted in human nature. This perspective aligns with the evolving trends of our time.

5.2. Buddhism and responsibility

Buddhism is a path of practice and spiritual development that leads to insight into the true nature of reality. Buddhist practices serve as a means of transforming oneself to cultivate awareness, kindness, and wisdom. Moreover, Buddhism has maintained a prominent place in modern life due to its timeless applicability, which stems from a set of eternal values.

VI. ETHICS AND RIGHTS OF MORALITY

Ethics, at its core, is the science of distinguishing between right and wrong, with its fundamental doctrine rooted in decent human behavior. It encompasses the study of universal values such as the inherent equality of all men and women, human and natural rights, obedience to the law, concern for health and safety, and, increasingly, care for the natural environment.⁵

Buddhist ethics is a term of convenience used to describe systems of morality as well as styles of moral reasoning that have emerged within Buddhist traditions. Buddhism upholds the principles of peace and fraternity, with its philosophy being entirely based on ethical and moral values. Buddhist morality plays a crucial role in establishing social harmony. Virtue (*sīla*) – the right conduct of behavior—is the foundation of a healthy and meaningful existence. In *Pāli*, *sīla* refers to “moral virtues” and constitutes the second category of the Noble Eightfold Path. It comprises: (1) *Right Speech*, (2) *Right Action*, (3) *Right Livelihood*.

⁴ Prof. Kanak Baran Barua, *Essence of Buddhism & World View* (Dhaka: Zumzumi Prokashon, 2016), pp. 293 – 294.

⁵ Dr. Vikash Singh, ed. by Ven. Dr. Moragollagama Uparathana (Editor-in-Chief), *IATBU 5th International Conference Journal* (Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, 2018), pp. 20.

Śīla appears as ethical precepts observed by both lay and ordained Buddhist practitioners. It includes: (1) The Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*) for laypeople; (2) The Eight or Ten Precepts (*aṭṭha-sīla/ dasa-sīla*) for those observing a monastic lifestyle; (3) The *Vinaya* (*Pātimokkha*), the monastic disciplinary code followed in Buddhist monasteries

6.1. Precepts: Minimal standard of Buddhist morality

The Five Precepts are the foundation of Buddhist ethics. *Sīla* is a source of great strength and serves as a protective shield for human beings. It spreads like an incomparable fragrance, enveloping life with purity and virtue. It is the perfect foundation for the noble path and a universal vehicle for spiritual progress. Buddhist scriptures explain the Five Precepts (Pāli: *pañcasīla*; Sanskrit: *pañcaśīla*) as the minimal standard of Buddhist morality. Alongside the monastic rules, they form the most fundamental ethical system in Buddhism. The Five Precepts apply to both male and female devotees, and they are: (1) Abstain from killing (*ahimsa* - non-violence); (2) Abstain from stealing; (3) Abstain from sensual (including sexual) misconduct; (4) Abstain from lying; (5) Abstain from intoxicants. Upholding the Five Precepts is rooted in the principle of *ahiṃsā* (non-harming), a core tenet of both Pāli and Sanskrit Buddhist traditions.

The Pāli Canon encourages practitioners to reflect on their own experiences and, based on that understanding, to avoid harming others. Compassion and a belief in karmic retribution serve as the foundation of these precepts. Observing the Five Precepts is an integral part of lay Buddhist devotional practice, both at home and in temples. However, adherence to these precepts varies by region and historical period.⁶

In the *Mahāyāna* tradition, the Five Precepts are sometimes referred to as the Śrāvakayāna Precepts, distinguishing them from the Bodhisattva Precepts. Unlike religious commandments, the Five Precepts do not impose sanctions for transgressions; instead, their influence lies in the Buddhist understanding of karmic consequences and their impact on the afterlife. According to Buddhist beliefs, violating the Five Precepts leads to karmic repercussions. For instance, (1) Killing results in rebirth in the hell realms, with more severe suffering if the victim was a monastic; (2) Adultery can lead to rebirth as a prostitute or, depending on the circumstances, in the hell realms. In lay Buddhist culture, these moral precepts are voluntarily self-enforced through faith in karma and rebirth. Within Buddhist doctrine, the Five Precepts serve as a means to cultivate the mind and character, paving the way for progress on the path to enlightenment.

6.2. Factors of morality

A devotee must first develop his morality, that is, his actions should bring good to other living beings. He does this by faithfully adhering to the precepts

⁶ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

of abstaining from killing, slandering, stealing, becoming intoxicated or being lustful. As he develops his morality, his mind will become more easily controlled, enabling him to develop his powers of concentration. Finally, with the development of concentration, wisdom will arise.

According to Buddhism, morality consists of the following three Factors:

(1) Right Speech: Right speech involves both respect for truth and concern for the welfare of others. It means refraining from lying, backbiting, slander, harsh speech, and idle gossip. We often underestimate the power of speech and exercise little control over our words. However, at some point in our lives, we have all been hurt by someone's words, just as we have been uplifted by the kind words of another. It is said that a harsh word can wound more deeply than a weapon, whereas a gentle word has the power to transform even the hardest of hearts. To cultivate a harmonious society, we must develop mindfulness over our speech, using it wisely and positively. Our words should be truthful, promote harmony, and be spoken with kindness and meaning. The Buddha once said: "Pleasant speech is sweet as honey, truthful speech is beautiful like a flower, and wrong speech is unwholesome like filth."

(2) Right Action: Right Action entails respect for life, respect for the property and rights of others, and respect for personal relationships. It corresponds to the first three of the Five Precepts, which every Buddhist is encouraged to observe: Refraining from killing or harming any living being – Life is precious to all. All beings fear punishment and death, and they value their existence. Therefore, we should not take life, as we cannot create it. Instead, we should avoid harming any sentient being and cultivate kindness and compassion toward all; Refraining from stealing or dishonest dealings – Respect for property means not taking what is not given, whether through theft, cheating, or coercion; Refraining from sexual misconduct or misuse of the senses – Respect for personal relationships means avoiding adultery and sexual misconduct. This is essential for upholding moral integrity, controlling the senses, preserving love and trust in relationships, and fostering a stable society.

(3) Right Livelihood: It is to engage in occupations which are not harmful to others. Five kinds of occupations are to be avoided. Viz: (1) Trading in slavery or human beings, (2) Trading in weapons, (3) Trading in flesh, (4) Trading in intoxicating drink and drugs, and 5) trading in poisons. Instead, individuals are encouraged to engage in peaceful and ethical occupations, such as: (1) Agriculture, (2) Dairy farming for milk, butter, ghee, etc. (3) Industries, (4) Service to the state. The remaining three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path focus on developing wisdom through the purification of the mind: Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. By practicing these factors, one strengthens and gains control over the mind, ensuring that their actions remain wholesome. Ultimately, this mental discipline prepares one to realize the truth, which leads to freedom and enlightenment.⁷

⁷ Ven. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Taiwan: Corporate Body of the Buddhist

VII. UNIVERSAL LOVING-KINDNESS IN BUDDHISM

The importance of loving-kindness in Buddhism is profound and far-reaching. Few other traditions have outlined commands, rules, and ethical guidelines for fostering friendship toward all beings as extensively as Buddhism. Practicing loving-kindness means making one's life fragrant with the virtues of spiritual qualities – adorned with kindness, generosity, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline. The Buddha, the Tathāgata, holds a unique place in the hearts of people worldwide through his profound wisdom, boundless compassion, and rational teachings. His life exemplifies great sacrifice, selflessness, forgiveness, love, and kindness. His teachings were delivered for the benefit of all, conveying a universal message of equality and friendship. The cultivation of universal loving-kindness calls for an immeasurable sense of care and compassion toward all beings on earth. The Buddha taught: “As you are happy, give others a chance to be happy”.

This principle forms the core of universal loving-kindness. When we cultivate kindness and compassion within ourselves, they naturally extend to all other beings, creating a ripple effect of goodness in the world.

7.1. Four divine abodes (*Brahmavihāras*)

In Buddhism, the *Four Divine Abodes*—also known as the *Four Immeasurables* or *Brahmavihāras* in Sanskrit – are the supreme emotions or mental states. They are: loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), equanimity (*upekkhā*). These four qualities provide a framework for cultivating positive behaviors while minimizing harmful ones. They are considered divine because they embody love, goodwill, and boundless compassion toward all sentient beings, leading to a sublime and peaceful state of mind. The *Brahmavihāras* are also referred to as the Four Sublime Attitudes or the Four Infinite Minds, as they foster an all-encompassing, selfless concern for others. By cultivating these qualities, one nurtures a profound sense of inner peace and harmony, both within oneself and in interactions with others.⁸

(1) Loving-kindness (*Mettā*): *Mettā* is the opposite of jealousy. It is an all-encompassing kindness – an inner wish from the heart for the happiness of others. Kindness cultivates greatness in human character, stabilizes the mind, and frees individuals from tension, anger, and jealousy. It encourages friendship and goodwill toward all beings. Those who practice *mettā* do not even joke about wishing harm upon others, nor do they take pleasure in the suffering of others. Instead, they cultivate genuine friendship and are saddened by the pain of others, never desiring their harm.

(2) Compassion (*Karuṇā*): *Karuṇā* is kindness in action – the sincere desire to alleviate the suffering of others. Compassion arises from an inability to tolerate the suffering of others, making it a source of generosity in human character. It inspires people to extend a helping hand to those in distress,

Educational Foundation).

⁸ Bhikkhu Kondayon, *Bouddharme Bishwamoitri O Trisharan* (1980), pp. 55 – 56, 67 – 68.

fostering a spirit of continuous selfless giving. Compassion is one of the defining qualities of the Buddha's life.

(3) **Sympathetic Joy (*Muditā*)**: *Muditā* is the ability to rejoice in the success, happiness, and good fortune of others. It is the opposite of jealousy and serves as a guiding force for mutual happiness and progress. *Muditā* fosters coexistence and shared joy, enabling individuals to celebrate the achievements of others without resentment. True *muditā* manifests as an unwavering attitude of happiness for others, whether in times of joy or sorrow.

(4) **Equanimity (*Upekkhā*)**: *Upekkhā* is a state of complete calm and mental stability. It is often observed that people feel sorrow for the suffering of loved ones but remain indifferent to the suffering of those they dislike. True equanimity arises from understanding *karma* – that all beings inherit the results of their actions, whether good or bad. By reflecting on the consequences of *karma*, one eliminates hostility and self-centered expectations, attaining mental balance and stability. *Upekkhā* enables one to judge fairly, suppress selfish desires, and remain unwavering in the face of life's challenges. It also serves as an inspiration to perform wholesome deeds at all times.

Everyone needs to cultivate these four qualities. Awakening the ideals of friendship and compassion within the heart leads to true peace and harmony. Only by practicing these principles can happiness and peace be established in the world.

7.2. Impact of universal loving-kindness in Buddhism

Universal Loving-Kindness holds immense significance in Buddhism. The simple yet profound words, “May all beings be happy”, are deeply rooted in Buddhist teachings. These words are seldom found in the *Vedas* or *Upaniṣads*, where ritual slaughter (immolation) is prescribed in certain practices. Furthermore, in those scriptures, if someone mistakenly offended a sage, they would often be cursed immediately. However, it is not the nature of a truly enlightened being to curse the ignorant or the unknowing. Those who engage in cursing others lack true forgiveness, for only those who cultivate forgiveness can truly forgive. Many places once cursed by sages – such as *Daṇḍakāraṇya*, *Mātāṅgāraṇya*, and *Kaliṅgāraṇya* – remain desolate and unprotected even today.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* was conceived in the context of the *Kurukṣetra* war. This reflects a mentality driven by hatred and hostility, one that leads to the battlefield in search of resolution. However, violence cannot be extinguished by more violence. Just as fire is not quelled by more fire, hatred cannot be overcome by hatred. Instead, one must pour the soothing waters of peace and compassion upon the flames of conflict.

The *Dhamma* teaches that “Victory breeds enmity, and defeat leads to sorrow”. Beyond both victory and defeat lies absolute peace. Today, the world is caught in an arms race, with nations competing for military supremacy as if they were puppets controlled by the illusion of power. War-driven leaders believe that peace can be established through military might, yet true peace cannot be achieved through bullets, cannons, or the imposition of influence.

This is why world peace leaders continuously submit proposals for disarmament to the United Nations. But peace cannot be achieved merely by speaking about it – it must first be cultivated in the innermost recesses of the human heart.

History offers no evidence that factionalism, war, or bloodshed has ever led to lasting peace. Buddhism stands as a testament to this truth: “This path has never been stained with human blood; everything has been won through the pure message of loving-kindness”. In some traditions, religious leaders or prophets have entered the battlefield, engaging in war to establish their faith. However, the compassionate Buddha never resorted to violence, nor did he wield a weapon of war. Instead, he conquered all through the power of kindness. Loving kindness (*mettā*) was his greatest weapon.

To embody the *Dhamma* of kindness in one’s life, one must first embrace the foundation of human ethics. The foundation of this human-centered path lies in the Five Precepts, which serve as the highest principles of peace and liberation. Without principles, the heart cannot cultivate kindness. A heart devoid of kindness is like a barren desert – just as no seed can grow in a desert, a heart lacking compassion cannot foster peace in society. Where there is no loving-kindness, the fires of unrest will always burn.

That is why the Buddha taught: “One should be compassionate, friendly, kind, benevolent, and compassionate toward all living beings. A truly friendly person cannot have enemies. It is better to meditate on loving-kindness even for a short time than to rule over the entire world or to perform a *yajña* costing millions of coins”.⁹ “He who, with mindfulness, cultivates boundless loving-kindness toward all beings gradually weakens the ten fetters and ultimately attains the peace of *Nibbāna*”. The Buddha’s teaching on universal benevolence underscores the transformative power of *mettā*, or loving-kindness, as a central virtue on the path to liberation. To be compassionate, friendly, kind, benevolent, and non-hostile toward all living beings is to cultivate a heart free from enmity and ill-will. A person who truly embodies *mettā* ceases to perceive others as adversaries, for their mind is steeped in unconditional goodwill, transcending personal biases and divisions.

Epilogue

In this paper, I aim to examine how inner peace – or the lack thereof – affects human beings and the environment around us. This study identifies the qualities of inner peace according to Buddhist thought and explores how these qualities can help resolve conflicts and foster harmony and peace for humanity. Inner peace is a profound state of calm, acceptance, and contentment. It means being in harmony with oneself, others, and the world. Unlike external circumstances, which are often unpredictable and fleeting, inner peace arises from within and is cultivated through self-awareness, acceptance, mindfulness, and self-care.

⁹ *Yo ca mettāṃ bhāveyati appamāṇaṃ paṭissato/Tanu saṃyojanā honti passatopi upadhikkhayaṃ.*

Cultivating inner peace is a journey of self-exploration and self-acceptance. It involves finding tranquility and serenity within oneself despite the chaos of the outer world. This process requires learning to observe thoughts and emotions without labeling them as good or bad. By practicing non-judgment, one creates space for acceptance, clarity, and lasting peace.

The mind is a powerful force – it can be our greatest ally or our worst enemy, depending on how we use it. When we learn to cultivate a positive mindset by focusing on the good, we naturally develop a deeper sense of inner peace. By embracing each mindful moment, inner peace becomes not just an abstract concept but a tangible reality—one that is always within reach.

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THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN INNER AND OUTER PEACE: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

This article explores the Buddhist approach to peace, emphasizing the interconnection between inner peace and social harmony through the principle of Dependent Co-arising (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*). It examines Buddhist ethical foundations through the Five Precepts (*Pañca-sīla*) as guidelines for personal conduct that foster social well-being. The text details meditation practices, particularly mindfulness (*sati*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*), as methods for cultivating inner tranquility. It further explores the Four Sublime States (*Brahma-vihāras*) and forgiveness as transformative practices for healing relationships. The article highlights Engaged Buddhism as exemplified by figures like Thich Nhat Hanh, Maha Ghosananda, and Ajahn Buddhadasa, who applied Buddhist principles to address social issues, environmental concerns, and post-conflict reconciliation. The conclusion emphasizes that spiritual practice is inseparable from daily life challenges and that inner transformation provides resources for effective action in creating a more peaceful world.

Keywords: *Peace, dependent co-arising, meditation, ethics, Engaged Buddhism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of peace has been a constant in the human journey, manifesting both in individual aspirations and in collective movements for social transformation. Throughout history, human beings have come together both for conflict and peaceful coexistence. From a Buddhist perspective, conflict arises from three primary roots: the desire to acquire (*lobha*), which manifests as greed for resources and power; the desire to subdue (*dosa*), expressed through violence and oppression; and ignorance (*moha*), revealed in the inability to recognize our fundamental interdependence. Peace, in turn, arises from a transformation of the

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heart that turns toward more refined and sublime goals.

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF DEPENDENT CO-ARISING

The principle of Dependent Co-Arising (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*), fundamental to Buddhist philosophy, asserts that all phenomena arise in dependence on causes and conditions. This principle highlights the interconnection of all beings and the universe. Just as a drop of water creates ripples in a lake, gradually affecting its entire surface, an individual's mental state influences their actions, which in turn affect the whole community. We can observe this dynamic, for example, when a community leader, by cultivating and expressing qualities such as compassion and equanimity, inspires positive change in their surroundings.

This interdependence operates in two directions: by cultivating inner peace, it naturally extends to the outer world, manifesting in our family, professional, and community relationships. Conversely, we are profoundly influenced by external agents – cultural, religious, political, and economic forces can drive us either toward violence or toward social harmony.

2.1. Tools for cultivating peace

The Buddhist tradition, grounded in this understanding of interdependence, has developed various tools to foster both inner and outer peace:

Mindfulness (*sati*): A fundamental practice for achieving inner peace. By observing thoughts and emotions without attachment or aversion, individuals can break reactive patterns that often lead to conflict. For example, by noticing the arising of anger, we create space between stimulus and response, allowing for wiser action.

Ethical Living: The Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*) provide a moral framework that supports both inner and outer peace: (1) Abstaining from harming living beings: promotes compassion and non-violence. (2) Abstaining from taking what is not given: This cultivates contentment and respect. (3) Abstaining from sexual misconduct: Fosters healthy relationships. (4) Abstaining from false speech: nurtures harmonious communication. (5) Abstaining from intoxicants: maintaining the mental clarity necessary for peace

Wisdom and Insight: Through meditation and contemplation, we develop an understanding of the nature of reality, recognizing the impermanence and interconnection of all phenomena. This wisdom reduces attachment and aversion, leading to deeper inner peace.

2.2. Challenges and limitations

The inherent challenge of the pursuit of peace can be illustrated through a significant historical episode in the early Buddhist community. During the Buddha's time, a serious conflict arose among the monks of Kosambi, demonstrating the complexities of harmonizing differing perspectives, even within a community dedicated to peace.¹

The conflict began when two groups of monks disagreed on matters of

¹ MN 48. Kosambiya Sutta; Vinaya Pitaka – Mahavagga X of the Khandhaka.

monastic discipline and practice to the point that they refused to perform the *Upasatha* (the observance and recitation of monastic rules) together – a grave sign of disunity within the *Saṅgha*. Even with the Buddha's direct intervention – traveling to Kosambi to mediate the dispute – the monks remained obstinate. Faced with this situation, the Buddha chose to withdraw to a nearby forest, allowing the monks to reflect on their actions. Only after his departure did they realize the gravity of their attitudes and the importance of communal harmony, eventually seeking reconciliation.

This episode not only demonstrates the inherent difficulties in conflict resolution but also highlights a broader issue: the complexity of addressing systemic problems through individual transformation alone. Critics rightly argue that issues such as poverty, inequality, and political oppression cannot be resolved solely through the cultivation of inner peace.

The Buddhist response to this challenge must take place on two complementary fronts. First, by recognizing that lasting social transformation necessarily begins with individual transformation. Second, by understanding that inner peace must be accompanied by collective actions that address the structural causes of conflict, including the promotion of education, economic justice, and environmental sustainability. These are core principles of Engaged Buddhism, as taught by masters such as Thich Nhat Hanh and Mahā Ghosananda, among others.

This understanding of the interconnection between inner and outer peace lays the foundation for a holistic approach to peace – one that acknowledges both the importance of individual transformation and the necessity of collective action to create a more just and peaceful world.

2.3. The ethical foundation of peace

The pursuit of peace is a universal desire that transcends cultures and borders. However, achieving lasting peace requires a foundation of ethical principles that guide our actions and decisions. In the Buddhist tradition, the Five Training Precepts, known as *Pañca-sīla*, provide an essential framework for cultivating a peaceful and harmonious life. These principles are not presented as absolute commandments but as practical guidelines for ethical training that sustain both individual and collective well-being, creating the necessary conditions for a society founded on compassion, respect, and mutual understanding.²

2.4. The Five Precepts (*Pañca-sīla*)

2.4.1. Abstaining from harming living beings (*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*)

This first precept is a fundamental principle that recognizes the inherent value and dignity of all forms of life. By practicing it, we commit ourselves not

² The ethical foundation of Buddhism is well discussed in Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 67 – 72, and Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 123.

only to avoiding taking lives but also to preventing physical and psychological harm to beings. This voluntary abstention gradually cultivates the positive virtue of compassion (*karuṇā*) and the quality of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*).

In daily practice, this precept encourages us to adopt a non-violent approach to conflict resolution, prioritize dialogue over aggression or coercion, develop sensitivity to the needs of other beings, and promote a culture of peace and understanding in our communities. At a broader social level, this precept underlies pacifist movements and inspires restorative justice systems that seek healing rather than punishment.

2.4.2. Abstaining from taking what is not given (*Adinnādānā veramaṇī*)

The second precept transcends the simple prohibition of theft, encompassing all forms of wrongful appropriation. It is a profound recognition that our actions have consequences and that taking what rightfully belongs to others causes harm and suffering. By respecting others' property and rights, we build trust and foster a culture of community security.

This precept also encourages us to develop a mindset of generosity (*dāna*) and sharing, responsible and sustainable consumption practices, respect for shared natural resources, and recognition that our possessions can bring benefits to others. In a broader context, this precept challenges economic systems based on excessive exploitation and suggests alternative models based on equity and sustainability.³ The second precept can inspire a movement toward mindful consumption, encouraging individuals to consider the environmental and social impact of their choices. This idea aligns with the growing interest in minimalism and sustainable living.

2.4.3. Abstaining from improper sensual conduct (*Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*)

This precept recognizes the sensual dimension of human relationships and reminds us that our actions in this sphere have a profound impact on ourselves and others. Observing this ethical principle cultivates respect for boundaries and consent in interpersonal relationships, creating a foundation of trust and integrity.

In practice, this precept guides us to develop empathy for the needs and vulnerabilities of others, prioritize relationships built on mutual respect, cultivate clear communication and informed consent, honor commitments and relational agreements, and cultivate a healthy relationship with our senses. The application of this precept promotes a culture that values personal dignity and repudiates the objectification or instrumentalization of beings.

2.4.4. Abstaining from false speech (*Musāvādā veramaṇī*)

The fourth precept recognizes the extraordinary power of human communication. Our words can cause profound harm or promote healing

³ Cf. Sivaraksa, Sulak. *The Wisdom of Sustainability: Buddhist Economics for the 21st Century* Kihei. Koa Books, 2009, p. 56 – 60.

and reconciliation. By speaking with sincerity, kindness, and discernment, we create a culture of honesty, transparency, and respect that sustains social peace.

This precept encompasses not only the abstention from direct lies but also avoiding divisive speech that creates discord between people, refraining from harsh speech that wounds others' feelings, avoiding frivolous conversations that waste energy and create confusion, and cultivating beneficial speech (*sammā vācā*) from the Noble Eightfold Path.

2.4.5. Abstaining from intoxicating substances that cloud mental clarity (*Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*)

The fifth precept recognizes the crucial importance of mental clarity for ethical conduct. Our actions are significantly influenced by the state of our mind, and certain substances can compromise our ability to discern, increasing behaviors that violate the other precepts.⁴

By observing this principle, we cultivate clarity of perception and mindfulness, care for physical and mental health, self-awareness and personal responsibility, and the capacity to make decisions aligned with our deepest values.

2.5. The contribution of the precepts to individual and social peace

The observance of these Five Precepts generates multiple benefits that contribute to peace at different levels.

At the individual level, these ethical principles cultivate a mental serenity that will progressively lead to confidence in one's ability to live ethically, the absence of remorse and regret (*avippaṭisāra*), and healthy self-esteem. At the interpersonal level, they promote relationships characterized by trust and respect, clear and constructive communication, and a predominance of non-violent conflict resolution. And at the broader social level, they create conditions for the growth of a culture of nonviolence and respect for life, a sense of community and connection among individuals, and the responsible use and fair sharing of resources.

The interconnection of these three levels demonstrates how individual ethical practice directly contributes to social transformation. The Five Training Precepts are not merely personal rules but principles that, when widely adopted, can serve as the foundation for more just and peaceful social institutions.

2.6. The role of meditation in cultivating inner peace

In a world marked by agitation, conflict, and suffering, the pursuit of inner peace becomes an essential journey for both individual and collective well-being. Among the various practices that lead to this inner serenity, meditation stands out as a powerful tool capable of transforming the mind and heart. In this section, we will explore two fundamental meditative practices in the Buddhist tradition: the practice of mindfulness (*sati*) and the meditation of loving-kindness (*mettā*). Modern neuroscience research has also shown that

⁴ Marlatt, G. Alan. *Mindfulness and the Addictive Process*. New York: Guilford Press, 2010, p. 45 – 50.

mindfulness and loving-kindness meditation can lead to structural changes in the brain, such as increased gray matter density in areas associated with emotional regulation and empathy. This scientific validation supports the transformative potential of these practices.⁵ Through these complementary approaches, we can understand how meditation cultivates inner calm, reduces negative emotions, and consequently contributes to a more peaceful world.

2.7. Mindfulness (*Sati*): Conscious presence in the task of the moment

The practice of mindfulness, or vigilance, invites the individual to direct their attention to the present moment in a broad (non-selective) manner and without hasty judgment. By observing sensations, thoughts, and emotions as they arise – without being carried away by them – the practitioner develops greater awareness of themselves and the world around them. This full awareness allows one to break the cycle of automatic reactivity that often dominates us, leading to impulsive and negative actions.

The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*⁶, one of the fundamental texts of Buddhism, offers a detailed guide on how to cultivate mindfulness through four foundations:

2.7.1. Mindfulness of the body (*Kāyānupassanā*)

By practicing mindfulness of the body, the individual carefully observes the physical sensations that arise, such as breathing, bodily movements, and postures, without identifying with them. This practice develops a sense of grounding in the present, reducing anxiety and concern for the future while also promoting a deeper understanding of the body, diminishing the illusions we have about it.

A classic example from Buddhist literature that illustrates this is the story of the monk Vakkali. He was a disciple of the Buddha who suffered from a strong attachment to the physical body, admiring its beauty and form. The Buddha, perceiving his attachment, instructed him to contemplate the impermanence of the five aggregates, of which the body is one. By practicing in this way, Vakkali gradually freed himself from his attachment and attained enlightenment.⁷

2.7.2. Mindfulness of sensations (*Vedanānupassanā*)

This practice allows one to observe the subtle impressions of pleasure, displeasure, and neutrality, which later give rise to afflictive emotions such as anger or sadness. Instead of reacting impulsively, the practitioner simply observes these mental sensations, recognizing their transient nature and lack of a permanent essence. This cultivated observation develops equanimity – the ability to maintain calm and balance in the face of life's ups and downs.

⁵ Suggested reading: Davidson, Richard J. and Begley, Sharon. *The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live – and How You Can Change Them*. New York: Penguin Books, 2012, p. 44.

⁶ Cf. Analayo, Bhikkhu. *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*. Cambridge: Windhorse Publications, 2003, p. 45 and Goldstein, Joseph. *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening*. Boulder: Sounds True, 2013, p.78.

⁷ SN 47.31.

2.7.3. Mindfulness of the mind (*Cittānupassanā*)

Mindfulness about the mind enables one to observe arising thoughts without identifying with them. Rather than becoming lost in ruminations about the past or worries about the future, the practitioner simply recognizes thoughts as transient mental events. Furthermore, the practitioner becomes familiar with the various mental states experienced throughout the day. This practice cultivates mental clarity and the ability to see things as they truly are without conceptual distortions.

2.7.4. Mindfulness of facts of life (*Dhammānupassanā*)

Finally, mindfulness of essential aspects of nature allows one to observe the fundamental characteristics of experience, such as impermanence (*anicca*),⁸ the unsatisfactory nature of conditioned things (*dukkha*), and the absence of an essential and permanent core (*anattā*). By practicing in this way, we can identify patterns of thought and behavior that condition us and begin to free ourselves from their influence, cultivating healthier and more positive habits.

2.8. *Mettā*: Cultivating loving-kindness

Ashin Thittila explains: “Our happiness is made more intense and more lasting when shared with friends; therefore, the best way to be happy is to make others happy as well. We should do everything we can for others - in short, everything we do, any thought we think, any word we speak, should be for the well-being, peace, and happiness not only of ourselves but of others. The result of such actions is peace, happiness, and friendship.”⁹

Loving-kindness meditation (*mettā*) is a practice that involves the systematic cultivation of acceptance and fraternal love for oneself and all beings. This practice follows a gradual sequence:

(1) It begins with generating feelings of friendship and goodwill toward oneself, recognizing one’s humanity, and sincerely wishing for personal well-being. (2) These feelings are then extended to others, starting with loved ones. (3) It progresses to neutral people (those with whom we have no significant emotional connection). (4) Then, loving-kindness is directed toward challenging individuals. (5) Finally, this feeling expands to all beings without distinction.

The *Mettā Sutta*, another important Buddhist text, describes the benefits of this practice: “The person who practices *mettā* sleeps happily, wakes up happily, has pleasant dreams, is loved by humans and non-humans, is protected by celestial beings, is not harmed by poison or weapons, and attains mental concentration.”¹⁰

The text also offers a powerful metaphor: “Just as a mother would protect

⁸ Chah, Ajahn. *Everything Arises, Everything Falls Away: Teachings on Impermanence and the End of Suffering*. Boston: Shambhala, 2005, p. 67.

⁹ Thittila, Ashin. *A Buddhist’s Companion*. Penang, Sukhi Hotu, 1997, p. 38.

¹⁰ *Sn* 1. 8.

her only child, even at the risk of her own life, so too should one cultivate a boundless heart toward all beings.”

An illustrative example from Buddhist literature is found in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, where the Buddha teaches the recitation of *mettā* to a group of monks who were terrified by spirits haunting a certain forest. After the dedicated practice of *mettā*, the spirits calmed down, and the monks were able to meditate in peace.

Regular practice of *mettā* significantly reduces negative emotions such as anger, hatred, and aversion. By cultivating love and compassion, the practitioner develops a more open and receptive heart, capable of forgiveness and deep connection with others. This genuine connection reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness, fostering a sense of community and interdependence.¹¹

2.9. Meditation as a political act

Although these meditative practices are essentially individual, they can also be understood as acts of political significance. By cultivating inner peace, we actively contribute to transforming the world around us. Through our practice, we consciously declare that we prefer and choose a peaceful mode of existence.

If each individual dedicated themselves to cultivating inner calm and genuine compassion, these individual transformations would gradually be reflected in social institutions, creating conditions for a more peaceful and harmonious world¹². This perspective underscores the profound interconnection between inner peace and outer peace, a central theme of this study.

2.9.1. The power of forgiveness, the *brahma-vihāras*, and reconciliation: Breaking the cycles of pain

Beyond meditative practices aimed at insight and wisdom, Buddhism offers various meditations that, together with loving-kindness (*mettā*), contribute to healing wounds and alleviating the suffering of a world filled with conflict.

2.9.2. Forgiveness as a transformative practice

Forgiveness does not imply accepting or minimizing the unjust action that hurt us. It is not about ignoring what happened but rather about not clinging to the burden of resentment, cultivating a lighter and more detached attitude toward suffering.

We can use the image of a crystal-clear river blocked by a dam of debris. The stagnant water is unable to flow freely. Anger, bitterness, and resentment are like these obstructions that hinder inner peace. We might think of forgiveness as the act of removing the dam, allowing the water to flow again – purified and free. Forgiveness practices can be introduced in many environments. For

¹¹ Many works discuss the practice of *mettā* from a modern perspective too. Some are: Salzberg, Sharon. *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Boston: Shambhala, 1995, p. 98 and Gunaratana, Bhante. *Loving-Kindness in Plain English: The Practice of Metta*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2017, p. 101.

¹² Macy, Joanna. *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007, 112 – 115.

example, in schools, they can help students develop emotional resilience and conflict resolution skills. This approach has been successfully implemented in programs like the Forgiveness Education Curriculum Enright.¹³

2.10. The four sublime states (*Brahma-vihāras*)

Venerable Rewata Dhamma emphasizes: “There is no point in sitting atop a mountain of gold or owning a mansion if you live a life of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. What truly matters is living happily with others, and the Buddha taught this in his discourse on the Four Sublime States”.¹⁴

These sublime states, known as *Brahma-vihāras*, are: (1) Loving-kindness (*mettā*) – The genuine wish for all beings to find happiness and well-being. (2) Compassion (*karuṇā*) – The heart’s response to the suffering of others, with the desire to alleviate it. (3) Appreciative joy (*muditā*) – Rejoicing in the happiness and success of others. (4) Equanimity (*upekkhā*) – A balanced mind that remains steady in all circumstances.

Each of these states has specific functions for individual and collective well-being and is cultivated through dedicated meditative exercises.

According to Ven. Rewata Dhamma: “If we extend these energies [of the sublime states] to others, they will also be positively affected by them. The Buddha frequently emphasized that we should be mindful of ourselves and every thought, word, and action, protecting ourselves from transmitting any impure or harmful energy to others. By doing so, all of humanity could indeed live happily and peacefully in this world, including animals and plants as well”.¹⁵

Venerable Mahinda further expands on this view, highlighting the importance of these practices, particularly for professionals working in caregiving and community service:

Developing these four qualities is essential, especially in caregiving professions and community service fields. Many people in these areas are affected, in one way or another, by the various sufferings of their clients, particularly when they are unable to eliminate or adequately alleviate that suffering. This occurs because they do not fully understand the nature of life on a deeper level and, as a result, struggle to maintain equanimity in the face of suffering. For anyone who wishes to help and bring benefit to others – whether to their own family, community, nation, or the entire world – it is essential to cultivate these immeasurable qualities, beginning with a solid foundation in the practice of *mettā*.¹⁶

¹³ Robert D. *Forgiveness Is a Choice: A Step-by-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 201.

¹⁴ Rewata Dhamma, Ven. *The Buddha’s Prescription*. Birmingham: Triple Gem Publications, 2005, p. 82.

¹⁵ Rewata Dhamma, Ven. *The Buddha’s Prescription*. Birmingham: Triple Gem Publications, 2005, p. 82.

¹⁶ Mahinda, Ven. *Awakening with Metta: For the Wellbeing and Happiness of All*. Selangor: BMSM Publication, 2014, p. 46.

This aspect is particularly relevant within the context of Engaged Buddhism, where the ability to sustain compassion and equanimity, even in the face of great social challenges, is fundamental for effective and non-violent action.

2.11. Reconciliation: From the individual to the collective

Reconciliation, in turn, arises from forgiveness and is strengthened through open and sincere communication. Loving-kindness meditation can be used as a tool for conflict resolution, fostering empathy and reducing hostility between conflicting parties. This approach has been applied in peacebuilding initiatives in post-conflict regions.¹⁷

To reconcile means to establish a renewed bond based on mutual respect, understanding, and personal responsibility. Reconciliation does not erase the marks of the past but rather transforms them into learned lessons and opportunities to build a more harmonious future. This process can take place both at the interpersonal level and on a broader social scale.

2.12. Engaged Buddhism: Applying inner peace to social action

Engaged Buddhism is a movement that emerged in the 20th century, primarily through the teachings of masters such as Thich Nhat Hanh, Ajahn Buddhadasa, and Maha Ghosananda. This movement emphasizes that Buddhist principles should not be confined to temples or individual meditation but must be actively applied to address social, environmental, and political issues. In other words, it is about bringing compassion, wisdom, and Buddhist ethics into the real world, transforming spiritual practice into concrete action.

The central idea of Engaged Buddhism is that inner peace is not an end in itself but a powerful tool for transforming the world. When we cultivate calm and mental clarity through meditation and mindfulness, we become capable of seeing the roots of suffering—both our own and that of others. This deep insight allows us to act more effectively and compassionately.

For example, imagine someone fighting against social injustice. If that person acts out of anger, they might end up perpetuating the cycle of violence and division. But if they act from a place of inner peace, their struggle becomes more strategic and inclusive. They can recognize that even those who commit injustices are victims of their ignorance and conditioning. This does not mean accepting wrongdoing but rather seeking solutions that heal the deep causes of suffering.

2.13. Thich Nhat Hanh and the strength of Vietnamese Buddhism

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk and one of the leading figures in Engaged Buddhism, often said: “Exploitation, social injustice, theft, and oppression occur in many forms and cause much suffering. The moment we commit to cultivating loving-kindness, loving-kindness arises in us, and we

¹⁷ Shapiro, Daniel L. *Negotiating the Nonnegotiable: How to Resolve Your Most Emotionally Charged Conflicts*. New York: Viking, 2016, p. 65.

make every effort to put an end to such things.”¹⁸ For him, Buddhist practice was a way to heal the world and our relationship with it. Practice could not be separated from daily life. If we see suffering in the world – whether hunger, social injustice, environmental destruction, or violence – it is our duty to act. However, this action must come from a place of inner peace and understanding, not from anger or hatred.

Thich Nhat Hanh and his monastic community did not just meditate – they actively worked to rebuild the social fabric that had been torn apart during the Vietnam War, tending to wounds and promoting peace dialogues. They demonstrated that it is possible to act with compassion even amid chaos, without losing connection to spiritual practice.

At his Plum Village community in France, he created a space where people could learn to live in harmony with themselves, with others, and with the planet. There, practices like walking meditation, mindful consumption, and compassionate dialogue were integrated into daily life, showing that a better world can be built through small, mindful actions.¹⁹

Another Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Tu, sees the need for Buddhism to engage in new ways to help people in today’s world. He states: “The idea of bringing Buddhism into real life is to respond to the many new and complex ideas and thoughts that emerge over time. This encourages Buddhism to take on a new role, ensuring its continued existence as a spiritual guide for people.”²⁰

2.14. Maha Ghosananda and peace in Cambodia

Known as the “Gandhi of Cambodia,” Maha Ghosananda led peace marches in his country, which had been devastated by decades of civil war. He taught that every step taken in a march was a meditation – an opportunity to cultivate inner peace and, at the same time, inspire others to do the same. His non-violent and deeply spiritual approach helped heal wounds and rebuild trust among people.²¹

This Cambodian monk lived in exile between 1975 and 1979, when the Khmer Rouge persecuted Buddhism, leading to the deaths of approximately two million people through starvation, disease, forced labor, and executions. Ghosananda was among the first monks to return to Cambodia after the Pol Pot regime was overthrown in 1979, helping to train new Buddhist leaders and restore Buddhism in the war-torn country.

In 1988, he was elected Supreme Patriarch of Cambodian Buddhism,

¹⁸ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1998, p. 49.

¹⁹ Hanh, Thich Nhat. *The World We Have: A Buddhist Approach to Peace and Ecology*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2008, p. 65.

²⁰ Thich Nhat Tu, *Engaged Buddhism, Social Change and World Peace*. Phu Nhuan: Religion Press, 2014, p. 101.

²¹ Ghosananda, Maha. *Step by Step: Meditations on Wisdom and Compassion*. Virginia: Parallax Press, 1992, p. 87.

recognizing his efforts in reviving Buddhist practice. During the 1990s, he led the Dhamma Yatra movement, a pilgrimage for peace and spiritual renewal in Cambodia. In 1994, during a peace march in a region still controlled by the Khmer Rouge, three Cambodians – including a monk and a Buddhist nun – were killed in the crossfire between government troops and rebels, yet Ghosananda escaped unharmed.

In 1997, after the rebels of Pailin surrendered and joined the government, Maha Ghosananda led another peace march in the region. This time, they were warmly welcomed by residents and former Khmer Rouge fighters – the same people who had previously executed monks and destroyed Buddhist temples.

2.15. Ajahn Buddhadasa and ecology

Ajahn Buddhadasa, a Thai monk and a key figure in Thailand, was a pioneer in connecting Buddhism with environmental protection. He taught that nature is a reflection of the Dhamma (universal truth) and that destroying the environment is equivalent to destroying ourselves. His vision inspired many ecological movements based on Buddhist principles, showing that caring for the Earth is a form of spiritual practice.

Buddhism considers the Dhamma to consist of 84,000 teachings, like drops of water for thirsty beings – each fulfilling the Buddha's wish to help all living beings. Ajahn Buddhadasa stated: "Buddhists are expected to spread the Buddha-Dhamma in this violent world to fulfill the Buddha's wish."²²

The Buddha's teaching is a direct path to reducing violence in the world. To spread the Dhamma does not mean forcing others to accept it, nor using violence or deception. Rather, it means making it available to as many beings as possible so that those who seek such teachings can easily find them.

Ajahn Buddhadasa also affirmed: "The Buddha said that his coming and the existence of his Dhamma-Vinaya were for the benefit of the masses, both deities and humans."²³

The Dhamma is the Buddha's teaching, and the Vinaya is the importance of personal discipline on this path. Understanding how the Dhamma-Vinaya can guide us toward peace is essential for those who seek to follow the Buddha's path.

2.16. How to apply engaged Buddhism in daily life

One does not need to be a monk or a professional activist to practice Engaged Buddhism. Here are some simple ways to integrate these principles into daily life:

- (1) Mindful Consumption – Before buying something, ask yourself if it contributes to greed, hatred, or harm to others. Choose ethical and sustainable products.
- (2) Compassionate Dialogue – When conflicts arise, practice deep listening and speak with kindness, seeking to understand the other person rather than just defending your point of

²² Buddhadasa, A. *A Buddhist Charter*. Chaya: Wat Suan Mokkh, 1982, p. 49.

²³ Ibid.

view. (3) Community Action – Get involved in projects that benefit your community, such as volunteering at shelters, organizing donation campaigns, or supporting educational initiatives ²⁴.

Engaged Buddhism²⁵ reminds us that spirituality is not an escape from reality but a way of facing it with courage and compassion. By cultivating inner peace, we become agents of transformation, capable of acting in the world without losing connection to our humanity and the deepest values of Buddhism.

III. CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, we have explored the many dimensions of an integral Buddhism – one that is concerned not only with inner transformation but also with the transformation of the world around us. We have seen how masters such as Thich Nhat Hanh, Maha Ghosananda, and Ajahn Buddhadasa, among many others, demonstrated that spiritual practice is not separate from daily life and the social, environmental, and political challenges we face.

This reflection invites us to recognize that cultivating inner peace through meditation, mindfulness, and the sublime states (*Brahma-vihāras*) can be powerful resources for our engagement in the world. When we act from a place of clarity, compassion, and equanimity, our actions become more effective and less likely to perpetuate cycles of violence and division.

The principle of Dependent Co-Arising (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*) teaches us that our inner state is deeply interconnected with the external world. By transforming ourselves, we influence our relationships, our communities, and the structures that shape society. Ethical living (*sīla*), mindful awareness (*sati*), and wisdom (*paññā*) do not serve only individual well-being; they form the foundation for a just and peaceful world.

Engaged Buddhism reminds us that spirituality is not an escape from reality but a way to confront it with wisdom and courage. Whether through the peace activism of Maha Ghosananda, the social and ecological consciousness of Ajahn Buddhadasa, or the practice of mindful living taught by Thich Nhat Hanh, the message is clear: true peace is both an internal and an external practice.

If each of us cultivates compassion, loving-kindness, and a commitment to justice, we not only transform our suffering but also contribute to breaking cycles of pain and conflict in the world. Inner peace and outer peace are not separate – they are two aspects of the same path toward a more harmonious and awakened existence.

²⁴ David R. Loy “Mindfulness, loving-kindness and compassion practices can be extended to include ecological awareness, encouraging individuals to develop a deeper connection with nature and a commitment to environmental stewardship”. is a modern proponent of many ideas in this field? Cf. His *Ecodharma: Buddhist Teachings for the Ecological Crisis*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2019, p. 45 – 9.

²⁵ For a basic approach of Engaged Buddhism, we suggest King, Sallie B. *Socially Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai Press, 2009, p. 67, and Queen, Christopher S. *Engaged Buddhism in the West*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000, p. 93.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR GLOBAL HARMONY: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Mrs. Rahima Akhter*

Abstract:

This article investigates how personal tranquility leads to world harmony via the lens of Buddhist teachings. Buddhist philosophy evolved on the concept of individual tranquility or inner purity, which has the potential to transform society and the world. The essay illustrates how Buddhist practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and compassion may help nurture inner peace and break the cycles of suffering that cause global strife.¹ Buddhism offers a framework for promoting personal and communal peace by addressing the root causes of suffering, such as greed, anger, and ignorance.²

This article explains the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path of the great Gautama Buddha as the main way of minimizing conflict for social well-being through ethical lifestyle and awareness. It also gives importance to connectivity and encourages avoiding selfishness for greater peace.³ This article illustrates how Buddhist philosophy may be applied in the present world to help Buddhist leaders and groups advocate peace-building, nonviolent action, and reconciliation movements. This essay explains how inner peace and self-awareness may help us avoid global challenges like violence, injustice, and environmental devastation.

From the term inner peace of individuals and global harmony, this study takes the inner peace of individuals as a foundational element for a peaceful and equitable world.⁴ The article tries to suggest that global harmony, peace, and a conflict-free world are possible through the Buddhist teaching of the

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¹ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 12.

² Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 45.

³ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 23.

⁴ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace Is Every Step*. New York: Bantam, 1991, p. 19.

inner peace of individuals. Through this lens, establishing inner peace is the most vital power to global harmony against global conflict, which is the lifetime teaching of Buddhist philosophy.⁵

Keywords: *Inner peace, global harmony, Buddhist philosophy, four noble truths, eightfold path, compassion, peacebuilding, self-awareness.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Inner purity, ethical principles, self-sacrifice, and awareness about suffering for social well-being are the major solutions to the world's current turmoil.⁶ The intricacies of modern society, as seen by social unrest, environmental disasters, economic inequality, and ideological disputes, highlight the necessity for a transformational approach to peacebuilding. In contrast to traditional endeavors such as political, economic, or technological, the Buddhist approach emphasizes an equally vital aspect: fostering inner peace as the foundation for long-term global harmony.⁷ Buddhism offers a basic paradigm for resolving the root causes of conflict, requiring a comprehensive transformation of individuals and society.

According to Buddhism, human awareness about suffering and its root causes creates the path of inner peace.⁸ Buddhist philosophy believes in the concept that the conflict we see in the world comes from greed, hate, and ignorance that exist inside the human mind.⁹ Thus, achieving global peace needs a simultaneous effort to build mental clarity, emotional equilibrium, and ethical integrity on an individual level. By addressing these fundamental elements, Buddhism provides a comprehensive and revolutionary approach to promoting peace that reaches beyond the individual to the interpersonal, social, and planetary levels.¹⁰

This introduction delves into the theoretical foundations, practical applications, and analytical features of the Buddhist approach to building personal peace and the implications for world harmony. It aims to highlight the relevance of ancient teachings in solving contemporary difficulties by combining core Buddhist ideas with real-world situations. Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, worked on the Four Noble Truths throughout his life and preached the Noble Eightfold Path

⁵ Sallie B. King, *Socially Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009, pp. 33 – 35.

⁶ Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007, p. 88.

⁷ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 12.

⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 8.

⁹ Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 53.

¹⁰ Sallie B. King, *Socially Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009, p. 105.

for achieving inner peace.¹¹ He also educates people on how to follow ethical ideals and urges them to use meditation methods for social good.¹² Finally, Buddhism emphasizes inner peace of mind, which leads to a sustainable and peaceful society via the resolution of all obstacles.

II. METHODOLOGY

The article takes a qualitative and interpretative approach to explaining how individuals might cultivate inner peace for world harmony via the perspective of Buddhist philosophy. The study is largely based on textual examination of significant Buddhist scriptures such as the *Dhammapada* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, as well as comments by notable Buddhist academics. Academic papers, books, essays, and works by famous scholars on peacebuilding via the Buddhist perspective are reviewed. The research also utilizes a comparative approach, relying on issues from modern peace studies and interreligious dialogue to contextualize Buddhist precepts within current global challenges. Meditation, good behavior, and effective communication skills may all contribute to communal peace and future global concord. This work contributes to resolving global conflict and establishing global harmony by demonstrating the proper methods of peacebuilding.

III. THE CONCEPT OF INNER PURITY IN BUDDHISM

Buddhist philosophy is primarily concerned with inner purity, through which universal peace can be attained.¹³ Inner purity is a condition free of greed, hatred, and ignorance, which are regarded as the primary sources of suffering (*dukkha*). Inner purity is not just a spiritual objective, but also a practical means of fostering harmony in individuals and societies. Buddhist philosophy holds that the human mind contains impurities or kleshas in some form. Inner purity operates here, progressively eradicating these impurities by ethical behavior (*sīla*), mental discipline (*samādhi*), and knowledge (*paññā*).¹⁴

Individuals can promote mental clarity by avoiding destructive actions and embracing love and compassion. Mental discipline, gained via meditation and mindfulness, enables one to assess thoughts and emotions without attachment or aversion.

This awareness helps to cleanse the mind, which leads to wisdom. Buddhism acknowledges three major defilements: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). These are recognized as the fundamental sources of suffering. Inner purity balances these three actions with generosity (*dāna*), loving kindness (*mettā*), and wisdom (*paññā*). According to Mahayana

¹¹ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 50 – 52.

¹² Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace Is Every Step*. New York: Bantam, 1991, p. 55.

¹³ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 25.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 18.

Buddhism, all beings have the potential for enlightenment, which is blocked by impurities that must be cleansed.¹⁵

Inner purity is a vast concept because it is the initial initiative toward global harmony. It has a great role in society, even the world. A pure mind is free from selfishness and malice. It helps to build peaceful relationships within communities. Buddhist teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings, suggesting that inner purity in individuals can create global harmony.

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL PEACE AND GLOBAL HARMONY

Many spiritual and philosophical system believes that individual peace leads to global harmony. However, Buddhism offers a distinct perspective. According to Buddhist teachings, individual peace is the basis for world peace. This relationship is based on the concept that people's thoughts and actions may have an impact on society and the globe. Cultivating inner peace is both a personal and societal responsibility, with far-reaching ramifications for world harmony.¹⁶

Individual mental and emotional tranquility eliminates unpleasant feelings such as wrath, hate, and fear. Meditation, mindfulness, and ethical living help people cleanse their thoughts and emotions. In this condition, people may respond to life's obstacles with greater clarity and compassion, decreasing personal suffering and fostering more harmonious connections with others. These peaceful individuals' interactions with their families, communities, and workplaces contribute significantly to world peace.

Buddhism's central message is that we are all interdependent. Each person's mental state impacts the social, political, and ecological systems with which they engage, ultimately shaping societal and global harmony. Every person's thoughts, actions, and emotions contribute to the greater fabric of society. As a result, building inner serenity becomes an effective weapon for promoting world harmony.¹⁷

Peaceful individuals can have a stronger impact on societal institutions. Leaders who cultivate inner peace are more likely to make compassionate and sensible decisions, supporting policies that promote justice, equity, and nonviolence. Violence, prejudice, and injustice are less likely in a society with a high proportion of peaceful people. Finally, the collective presence of inner peace can promote societal concord, which leads to the establishment of world peace.¹⁸

¹⁵ Sallie B. King, *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, pp. 50 – 51.

¹⁶ Sallie B. King, *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, p. 56.

¹⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 34.

¹⁸ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University

V. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AS A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING SUFFERING

Gautama Buddha, founder of Buddhism, himself preached the Four Noble Truths. These are the main forces for overcoming suffering. Gautama Buddha himself preaches the way of overcoming suffering or liberation after getting enlightenment. They are as follows;

5.1. The truth of suffering (*Dukkha*)

Gautama Buddha preaches that suffering is the ultimate for humankind. Everybody has suffered in life, both physical and psychological. They are dissatisfied, whether due to birth, age, disease, or death. The pleasure feeling is just transient and will eventually lead to pain. The Buddha taught that all conditioned experiences are ultimately unsatisfying, and that discontent, or suffering, is an unavoidable component of existence. Recognizing the reality of pain enables people to face life's natural obstacles rather than avoiding or ignoring them.¹⁹

5.2. The truth of the cause of suffering (*Samudaya*)

Suffering has several origins that stem from ignorance (*avijjā*) of the fundamental nature of existence. The desire for material items and pleasure is fleeting. Individuals who are attached to these ephemeral wants feel frustration, disappointment, and misery. The Buddha also highlighted additional sources of sorrow, such as hate (*dosa*) and illusion (*moha*), which contribute to the circle of suffering. Understanding the origin of misery allows people to recognize and eliminate the causes of their attachment and ignorance.²⁰

5.3. The truth of the cessation of suffering (*Nirodha*)

Human suffering, according to Buddhism, is a solvable problem. Individuals can achieve nirvana by letting go of attachment, hate, and ignorance. Nirvana is not a place, but rather a state of liberation from the cycle of yearning, suffering, and reincarnation. This fact stresses that freedom is possible, and it encourages people to live a life that decreases attachment while increasing wisdom and compassion.²¹

5.4. The truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*Magga*)

Gautama Buddha introduces or preaches the Noble Eightfold Path as a way to eliminate suffering. These motivate humans to engage in ethical behavior, mental discipline, and wisdom. They are right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Individuals who practice the Eightfold Path eventually

Press, 2000, p. 106.

¹⁹ *Dhammapada*, verse 1, *The Buddha's Words on the Nature of Suffering*, translated by Eknath Easwaran. Berkeley: Nilgiri Press, 2007, p. 10.

²⁰ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 22.

²¹ Dalai Lama, *The Art of Happiness*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998, p. 56.

cleanse their thoughts, alleviate suffering, and attain enlightenment.²²

VI. THE EIGHTFOLD PATH AS A PRACTICAL ROADMAP TO ETHICAL LIVING, AWARENESS, AND COMPASSION

The Noble Eightfold Path is a key Buddhist doctrine that provides a practical framework for people to develop ethical living, mental discipline, and wisdom. The Eightfold Path is a set of eight linked principles that encourage people toward a life of compassion, awareness, and ethical behavior.

6.1. Right understanding (*Sammā Dīṭṭhi*)

Right understanding refers to a clear and precise grasp of reality, notably the nature of suffering, impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anattā*). It is the foundation of the Eightfold Path because a thorough understanding of life's realities leads to sound decisions and actions. This understanding helps individuals overcome ignorance, which is the source of suffering.²³

6.2. Right intention (*Sammā Saṅkappa*)

Right intention refers to establishing the appropriate mentality and motives in all acts. It entails a willingness to abandon destructive impulses, ill will, and cruelty while nurturing attitudes of love, compassion, and harmlessness. It encourages people to behave politely, to alleviate pain, and to do well-being. It reverses bad emotions like greed, hate, and delusion into beneficial traits like charity, compassion, and wisdom.²⁴

6.3. Right speech (*Sammā Vācā*)

It inhibits lying, gossiping, or expressing anger. On the other side, it promotes honesty, respect, and harmony in interpersonal relationships. Individuals who communicate with care and consideration can build trust and compassion, reducing conflict and misunderstanding. This notion expresses Buddhism's belief in the power of words to provide serenity or inflict anguish.²⁵

6.4. Right action (*Sammā Kammanṭa*)

Right action entails engaging in ethical acts that improve the well-being of oneself and others. It promotes abstaining from negative behaviors such as murder, theft, and sexual misbehavior. Instead, good conduct promotes compassion, honesty, and respect for the rights and dignity of others.²⁶

²² Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*. New York: Broadway Books, 1998, p. 99.

²³ *Dhammapada*, verse 183, translated by Eknath Easwaran. Berkeley: Nilgiri Press, 2007, p. 78.

²⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 45.

²⁵ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 112.

²⁶ Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*. New York: Broadway Books, 1998, p. 105.

6.5. Right livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*)

It implies making a life without harming or exploiting others. It encourages occupations that benefit all species while discouraging those that involve deception, aggression, or damage, such as weapon trading, people trafficking, or exploitation. The correct livelihood is described as pursuing a career or way of life that aligns with ethical principles, social responsibility, and compassion.²⁷

6.6. Right effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*)

Right effort is very important to be enlightening for individuals. It gives importance to patience and wisdom. Right effort is the sign of a healthy mind. Right effort is mandatory for global harmony. The conflict and division among humankind can be eliminated through the right effort.²⁸

6.7. Right mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*)

Right mindfulness focuses on one's own body, emotions, thoughts, and mental states. It implies being present in the moment, without attachment or aversion. Meditation and careful observation can help people understand the impermanence and interdependence of all experiences.²⁹

6.8. Right concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*)

Right concentration as articulated in the *Eightfold Path*, is the disciplined practice of deep meditative absorption and sustained mental focus. It entails the deliberate cultivation of a tranquil, undistracted mind capable of unwavering attention to a single object, thought, or meditative state. This refined concentration serves as a foundation for profound insight (*vipassanā*) and inner tranquility (*samatha*), both of which are essential for the realization of wisdom (*paññā*).

Through practices such as *samatha* (calm-abiding meditation), individuals cultivate serenity, stabilizing their mental faculties and reducing cognitive turbulence. Meanwhile, *vipassanā* (insight meditation) sharpens discernment, allowing practitioners to penetrate the transient and interdependent nature of existence. By training the mind in sustained focus, one not only enhances mental clarity but also fosters the wisdom necessary to transcend afflictive states and erroneous perceptions that give rise to suffering (*duḥkha*).

Right concentration is not merely a technique for achieving meditative absorption (*jhāna*) but a transformative discipline that refines perception, strengthens mindfulness (*sati*), and ultimately leads to liberation (*nirvāṇa*). When cultivated with ethical integrity and right understanding, it becomes a powerful tool for deepening self-awareness, dissolving mental defilements (*kleśa*), and attaining an unshakable equanimity amidst the impermanence of life.³⁰

²⁷ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, 1974, p. 87.

²⁸ Dalai Lama, *The Art of Happiness*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998, p. 59.

²⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994, p. 93.

³⁰ Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*. New York: Broadway Books,

VII. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY: MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Mindfulness and meditation are important to Buddhist teachings and are used as transformational practices in everyday life to alleviate suffering, develop knowledge, and promote human progress. Mindfulness (*sati*) is the discipline of giving whole attention to the present moment with no judgment. In practice, mindfulness may be used in a variety of situations, from simple chores like eating, walking, or cleaning dishes to more sophisticated activities like working or engaging in social interactions. For example, by practicing mindfulness while eating, people may focus on the flavor, texture, and aroma of their food, which promotes appreciation and helps them avoid overeating. Similarly, in interpersonal interactions, mindfulness encourages people to listen carefully and respond deliberately, decreasing misunderstandings and conflict.

Mindfulness has several demonstrated advantages, including the ability to reduce stress, improve emotional management, and boost cognitive performance. Individuals who practice mindfulness become more aware of their thoughts and emotions, allowing them to respond to problems with greater clarity and wisdom rather than behaving impulsively or out of habit.³¹

Meditation (*bhāvanā*) is an established practice in Buddhist philosophy that teaches the human mind to be focused and concentrate to know reality. There are several types of Buddhist meditation, but they are divided into two categories: *samatha* (calm-abiding) and *vipassanā*.

Samatha meditation works for attention and mental calm. Practitioners often concentrate on a single object, such as the breath, a mantra, or a visualization, to calm the mind and nurture deep levels of peace. *Samatha* meditation reduces mental distractions, improves mental clarity.³²

Vipassanā, or insight meditation, seeks to achieve a profound knowledge of the nature of reality. All things are observed to be impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). Mindfulness and thorough observation help practitioners develop insight into the actual nature of their thoughts, emotions, and body sensations, eventually leading to the end of suffering.

Meditation has significant practical benefits. It assists people in managing stress, increasing emotional resilience, and improving attention. Regular meditation practice may help promote a strong feeling of empathy and compassion by encouraging the development of beneficial characteristics like loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) for oneself and others.³³

1998, p. 148.

³¹ Richard Davidson & Jon Kabat-Zinn, *The Mind's Own Physician: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama on the Healing Power of Meditation*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012, p. 107.

³² Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, 1974, p. 66.

³³ Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975, p. 34.

7.1. Mindfulness and meditation in modern contexts

In recent decades, mindfulness and meditation have gained popularity in a variety of secular settings, including schools, businesses, healthcare, and mental health facilities. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy are programs designed to assist people to manage stress, reduce anxiety, and enhance their general well-being.

In healthcare, mindfulness is utilized to assist patients in managing chronic pain, sadness, and anxiety, offering a comprehensive approach to healing and wellness.³⁴

7.2. Compassion and ethical living in Buddhism

Compassion (*karuṇā*) and ethical life are important Buddhist concepts that guide people towards moral integrity, mindfulness, and insight. *Karuṇā* promotes both individual well-being and world peace. Buddhism views compassion as an intentional commitment to easing the suffering of others, not only an emotional reaction to it. Beyond empathy or sympathy, the Buddhist concept of compassion exhorts people to act in ways that lessen the suffering and anguish of others.

7.3. Modern peacebuilding practices

Modern peacebuilding practices emphasize conflict resolutions at the very initial period. Otherwise, conflict becomes very violent. In the practical field, this process works hard to decrease political tensions, economic disparity, and social unrest, and takes proactive steps to resolve them. Different worldwide forums, political leaders, and religious figures collaborate to promote peace by monitoring potential causes of conflict. They collect and analyze data to identify hotspots of conflict.

Reconciliation is the primary impediment to peacebuilding in post-conflict settings. The conflict between parties creates a long-term distance between them. Sometimes there is a truth commission internationally. This commission is an international platform where the victims and perpetrators can tell the truth and become friends. This makes a situation of forgiveness.

Truth commissions, such as those in South Africa and Rwanda, are useful tools for helping countries confront their histories, uncover the truth about atrocities, and provide justice to victims. This process is the best way for long-term harmony.

To create lasting peace, modern peacebuilding places a strong emphasis on social justice and human rights. To lessen inequality and promote social harmony, everyone must have access to fundamental rights including free speech, healthcare, education, and work. The moral and legal underpinnings of peacebuilding are provided by human rights frameworks, which guarantee that all groups - especially marginalized ones - are involved in the peace process.

³⁴ Zindel V. Segal, Mark Williams, and John D. Teasdale, *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2002, p. 178.

Social justice programs aim to address economic disparities, inequality, and historical injustices that lead to conflict. Social justice can help prevent violence by building an egalitarian society in which all individuals and organizations can thrive.

Community-based peacebuilding emphasizes empowering local communities to take control of their peace processes. It highlights the significance of grassroots participation in developing solutions that are specific to local situations and needs. Community-based projects frequently involve local mediation, conversation, and conflict resolution activities aimed at resolving problems within communities before they worsen.³⁵

The strategy values local knowledge and experiences, recognizing that long-term peace can only be achieved by active community engagement in decision-making and conflict resolution. In this way, community-based peacebuilding encourages local ownership and guarantees that peace programs are culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Gender-inclusive peacebuilding is a critical component of contemporary peacebuilding efforts. Women and disadvantaged groups are generally disproportionately affected by war, and their perspectives are frequently silenced in peace talks. Recognizing women's roles as victims and active agents of peace is critical to attaining complete peace. Involving women in peacebuilding not only meets their needs but also leads to more successful and long-term peace results.³⁶

Inclusive peacebuilding emphasizes the importance of addressing the rights and needs of ethnic, religious, and other minorities. Inclusive peace processes involve a diverse group of stakeholders, ensuring that all opinions are heard and that the peace process is fair and reasonable.

Poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation are common sources of conflict, hence sustainable development is closely linked to peacebuilding. A comprehensive peacebuilding plan must incorporate programs promoting economic development, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Peacebuilding can help to promote long-term peace and prevent future conflicts by addressing the root causes of violence, such as a lack of opportunity, ineffective government, and environmental degradation.

Development initiatives that focus on education, health, infrastructure, and social welfare help to build peaceful and wealthy communities. Sustainable development promotes resilience, which reduces the chance of conflict and aids in post-conflict recovery efforts.

Worldwide collaboration is critical for peacebuilding, especially in areas where conflicts have worldwide implications. Diplomacy, peacekeeping, and international law all play critical roles in conflict management and resolution.

³⁵ John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 124 - 126.

³⁶ Carol Cohn, *Women and Wars*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, pp. 57 - 60.

International institutions, such as the United Nations, and regional entities, such as the African Union, collaborate to mediate peace negotiations, provide humanitarian aid, and deploy peacekeeping forces to protect people.

International collaboration also includes fighting transnational concerns like arms trafficking, people trafficking, and organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and instability. Effective diplomacy and multilateral initiatives are critical for achieving long-term peace on a global scale.³⁷

7.4. Buddhist peacebuilding in practice

Buddhist peacebuilding techniques provide practical answers to global conflict by emphasizing inner transformation and the cultivation of compassionate connections. Buddhist peacebuilders support social change via peaceful activity, drawing on the Buddha's teachings of nonviolence (*ahimsā*). This involves nonviolent demonstrations, civil disobedience, and support for justice and human rights.³⁸

The Buddhist ideals of mindfulness and compassion are used in conflict resolution initiatives to encourage discussion and understanding between opposing parties. Buddhist monks and leaders frequently play important roles in facilitating peace negotiations and reconciliation attempts.³⁹ Buddhism encourages understanding and cooperation among many religious traditions. Interreligious conversation, based on mutual respect and similar ideals, can assist in resolving religious conflicts and promote world unity.

VIII. THE ROLE OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES, LEADERS, AND PLACES IN PEACEBUILDING ACROSS THE WORLD

Buddhism makes major contributions to both personal and global peace. Buddhist texts, spiritual leaders, and religious institutions have all contributed significantly to peace, reconciliation, and conflict resolution. Each of these components contributes uniquely to the advancement of Buddhist peacebuilding teachings, and their influence may be observed in historical and present situations. Buddhist scripture Tripitaka, Mahayana Sutras, and other works teach ethics, and compassion as peacebuilding efforts.⁴⁰

Buddhism preaches *ahimsā* (nonviolence) and *karuṇā* (compassion) for mutual relationships. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path of Buddhism encourage ethical behavior, mindfulness, and wisdom to overcome suffering. These principles inspire people to live peacefully, promote social justice, and help others.

According to Buddhist philosophy, all creatures are linked by the concept of dependent origination. This perspective fosters a feeling of global responsibility, in which the well-being of one individual or group is inextricably

³⁷ Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005, pp. 226 - 229.

³⁸ Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999, pp. 45 - 47.

³⁹ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace Is Every Step*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991, p. 56.

⁴⁰ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. London: Gordon Fraser, 1978, pp. 34 - 38.

tied to the well-being of all others.⁴¹ Scripture emphasizes the value of empathy, reconciliation, and collaboration in peacebuilding initiatives.

Many Buddhist scriptures contain anecdotes and lessons about nonviolent dispute resolution. The Buddha was well-known for settling problems via discourse and knowledge. His counsel on avoiding destructive words, developing understanding, and remaining calm in stressful situations serves as a paradigm for peaceful dispute resolution in current contexts.

Buddhist texts also support mindfulness techniques, which assist people in developing mental clarity and emotional stability. These activities promote inner peace, which leads to a more peaceful external environment, whether at the interpersonal, communal, or global levels.

Buddhist leaders, such as monks, nuns, and spiritual instructors, play an important role in creating peace by embodying the Buddha's teachings and directing their communities via peacebuilding initiatives.

Buddhist leaders are regarded as moral authorities who uphold the virtues of compassion, nonviolence, and ethical behavior. Buddhist leaders strive for peaceful conflict resolution and frequently act as mediators in disagreements between Buddhist communities and other religious or ethnic groups. Buddhist temples and monasteries are traditional meditation sites where individuals can cultivate inner peace and mindfulness. Meditation promotes emotional resilience, mental clarity, and compassion, all of which are required for effective conflict resolution. Religious organizations promote individual peace, which contributes to communal and societal peace. Buddhist temples and religious establishments routinely host interfaith dialogues and peacebuilding activities. In areas of religious conflict, these centers serve as places of encounter and discussion, bringing people of all faiths together to promote mutual respect and understanding. Buddhist religious sites give a neutral venue for discussing disputes and finding peaceful solutions. Many Buddhist temples and monasteries support humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts, particularly in conflict-affected countries. Temples, for example, may provide refuge to those displaced by violence, offer educational programs for peace and conflict resolution, or take part in community development efforts that address the root causes of conflict, such as poverty and inequality. These religious organizations are typically at the forefront of efforts to rebuild communities after conflict.

Buddhist holy monuments, such as the magnificent temples of Southeast Asia and the stupas of Tibet, symbolize unity, peace, and nonviolence. These sites demonstrate the long-term effectiveness of spiritual practice in conflict resolution. Buddhist temples serve as tangible havens of peace, a visual and tactile reminder of the world's potential for harmony.

Buddhist religious institutions usually advocate environmental stewardship,

⁴¹ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 69 - 71.

recognizing that ecological well-being is intrinsically tied to societal peace.⁴² Monasteries, particularly those in rural areas, usually emphasize sustainable practices and environmental protection, fostering harmony not just amongst people but also with the world. The Buddhist concept of interconnectedness extends to the natural world, encouraging communities to protect the environment as a method of fostering long-term peace and harmony.

IX. CONCLUSION

The teachings of Buddhism, which stress inner peace, compassion, and nonviolence, provide a solid foundation for individual and global reconciliation. The root causes behind human suffering like greed, wrath, and ignorance can be overcome through some process of Buddhist philosophy. Buddhist religious teaching, religious places, and moral leadership of religious leaders play a role in healing the pain and suffering of humankind. They encourage individual peace that leads to social and global harmony eventually.⁴³

Buddhist leaders, through their advocacy for peace and justice, play an important role in conflict resolution, reconciliation, and inspiring social change movements. Buddhist religious sites are extensively utilized for meditation and spiritual practice, as well as to promote discourse and bring communities together for global peace. Buddhism's teachings outline a method for resolving problems and preaching peace in a society divided by political, religious, and social lines. The four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path of Gautama Buddha can prevent conflict in the world. The practice of these actions establishes peace which leads to global harmony. Individual enlightenment contributes to the whole human being peace, and world harmony.⁴⁴

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⁴² Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007.

⁴³ Christopher S. Queen, *Engaged Buddhism in the West*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000, pp. 101 - 105.

⁴⁴ Damien Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, pp. 61 - 64.

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CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

In a world increasingly afflicted by conflict, stress, and social unrest, the quest for lasting peace has become a fundamental concern. Buddhism offers a unique perspective on achieving peace, emphasizing that inner tranquility serves as the foundation for broader societal and global harmony. This study explores the Buddhist approach to cultivating inner peace through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and wisdom, primarily drawing from the Theravāda *Tipiṭaka*. The research examines how personal transformation - achieved through meditation (*samādhi*), morality (*sīla*), and wisdom (*paññā*) - reduces mental defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion. This process ultimately fosters a more compassionate and peaceful world. The study also highlights the interdependent relationship between inner peace and external harmony, illustrating how a peaceful mind influences social interactions, promotes nonviolence, and cultivates harmonious relationships within communities and beyond. Buddhist teachings suggest that true and lasting world peace cannot be achieved solely through political or diplomatic efforts; it must begin at the individual level. When individuals embody mindfulness and ethical values, their actions contribute to a ripple effect, leading to peaceful societies. Through this lens, the study underscores the relevance of Buddhist teachings in modern conflict resolution and global peacebuilding initiatives. The findings emphasize that cultivating inner peace is beneficial for personal well-being and essential for establishing sustainable world peace. Integrating these principles into contemporary peace efforts can help create a more harmonious world by addressing the root causes of conflict, mental agitation, and ethical decline through the transformative power of Buddhist wisdom.

Keywords: Buddhism, mindfulness, inner peace, *Theravāda Tipiṭaka*, world peace.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Peace is one of the most fundamental aspirations of human existence, sought by individuals, societies, and nations across history. However, peace is not merely the absence of conflict or violence; rather, it is a state of profound inner tranquility and ethical harmony. From a Buddhist perspective, true peace arises from mental transformation, which fosters harmony in both society and the world. Unlike conventional notions of peace, which emphasize external conditions such as political stability or legal frameworks, Buddhism views peace as an inner realization. This inner peace radiates outward, influencing interpersonal relationships, communities, and even global dynamics.¹

At the heart of Buddhist thought is the understanding that suffering (*dukkha*) is an inherent aspect of existence, arising from attachment (*taṇhā*) and ignorance (*avijjā*). The path to peace, therefore, does not lie in external control but in the cultivation of wisdom (*paññā*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and mental discipline (*samādhi*).² This perspective is embodied in the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*), which offers a structured approach to personal transformation and social harmony. Right View (*sammā-ditṭhi*) and Right Intention (*sammā-saṅkappa*) cultivate an awareness of interconnectedness, while Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*), Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*), and Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*) promote ethical behavior, fostering peace at both individual and societal levels.³

In addition to ethical conduct, Buddhist practice emphasizes mindfulness (*sati*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*) as essential tools for inner peace. Through practices such as mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) and loving-kindness meditation (*mettā-bhāvanā*), individuals cultivate mental stability and emotional resilience. These qualities are crucial for navigating conflicts with wisdom and compassion.⁴ This inner tranquility, known as *citta-śanti*, forms the foundation for peace on both societal and global levels. According to the Buddha's teachings, individuals who cultivate self-awareness and moral integrity contribute to a collective culture of peace, helping to reduce aggression, prejudice, and discord within communities.⁵

Furthermore, the Buddhist concept of interdependence (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) reinforces the idea that peace is not an isolated experience but a dynamic and interconnected process. Just as suffering arises through dependent origination, so too is peace cultivated through intentional actions and ethical choices that shape the well-being of others. This is evident in the practice of *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion), which inspire individuals to transcend self-interest and actively promote the welfare of all beings.⁶ In

¹ Gethin (1998), p. 89.

² Rahula, w. (2007), p. 43.

³ Bodhi, B. (2011), p. 27.

⁴ Analayo (2017), p. 52.

⁵ Gombrich (2009), p. 112.

⁶ Harvey (2009), p. 64.

this way, Buddhism provides not only a philosophical foundation for peace but also concrete methodologies for conflict resolution, social harmony, and global ethics.

This paper examines the Buddhist conception of peace, exploring its philosophical foundations and practical applications at both individual and societal levels. By analyzing key Buddhist teachings, ethical principles, and meditative practices, this study seeks to underscore the relevance of Buddhist thought in fostering sustainable peace. The discussion will also consider the implications of these teachings in contemporary contexts, demonstrating how Buddhist approaches to peace can help address modern challenges such as violence, inequality, and environmental crises. Ultimately, the Buddhist vision of peace serves as a holistic framework that integrates inner transformation with collective well-being, providing meaningful guidance toward building a more harmonious world.⁷

II. THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN BUDDHISM

In Buddhist philosophy, peace is understood as more than the mere absence of external conflict or violence; it is deeply rooted in the cultivation of a tranquil mind, free from the mental defilements that create suffering and unrest. These defilements - attachment (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) - are seen as the primary causes of mental disturbance and interpersonal conflict.⁸ Buddhist teachings suggest that true peace arises from purifying the mind, and through this internal transformation, individuals can experience lasting peace. The Buddha's teachings emphasize that the cultivation of peace within oneself can radiate outward, influencing society and the world. This interconnectedness suggests that an individual's inner peace is pivotal in fostering a peaceful world.⁹

This understanding of peace highlights the Buddhist perspective that lasting social and global harmony cannot be achieved without first addressing the mental and emotional states of individuals. As the Buddha stated in the *Dhammapada*, "All that we are is the result of what we have thought." This underscores the idea that the state of the mind is fundamental to the nature of our actions and, by extension, to the world we live in. When we transform our minds, we transform the world around us. This notion is further elaborated by the Dalai Lama, who asserts, "If we want world peace, we must develop peace within ourselves."¹⁰

III. INNER PEACE (*CITTA-ŚANTI*)

A fundamental aspect of peace in Buddhism is inner peace, known as *citta-śanti*. This concept is central to the Buddhist path, which represents a mental state of equanimity and serenity arising when the mind is freed from

⁷ Unesco Publishing (1996), p. 31.

⁸ Harvey (2018), p. 47.

⁹ Rahula, w. (2007), p. 62.

¹⁰ Dalai Lama (2009), p. 88.

the turmoil of craving, aversion, and ignorance. The Buddha's teachings stress that inner peace is not a passive state but an active achievement, which requires intentional practice and effort. As stated in the *Dhammapada*, "To the one who is not disturbed by the world, to the one who has cultivated inner peace, the world can be at peace."¹¹

This verse illustrates that inner tranquility is not merely a personal benefit but also a contribution to collective well-being. When individuals cultivate inner peace, they become less reactive to external circumstances with anger or fear, thereby reducing conflict and fostering harmony both within and around them.

According to Buddhism, inner peace is cultivated through mindfulness (*sati*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*). These practices help individuals observe their mental processes and gradually detach from patterns of thought and emotion that lead to suffering. Through mindfulness, practitioners develop heightened awareness of their thoughts and emotions, allowing them to respond with wisdom rather than react impulsively. Meditation deepens this awareness by training the mind to focus, strengthening concentration (*samādhi*), and cultivating insight into the nature of reality (*vipassanā*).¹²

Through these practices, harmful emotions such as greed, hatred, and delusion are gradually uprooted, while beneficial qualities like loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) are nurtured. These qualities are essential components of inner peace and contribute to the overall harmony of one's interactions with others.¹³ Highlights that the cultivation of *mettā* and *karuṇā* - qualities that involve the active wish for the well-being and happiness of all beings - is crucial in fostering not only personal peace but also a peaceful world.

IV. THE ROLE OF ETHICAL DISCIPLINE

Buddhist philosophy also emphasizes that inner peace is not merely a passive state of serenity but requires active mental and ethical discipline. The practice of the Noble Eightfold Path is fundamental to this process, outlining the essential steps for overcoming suffering and attaining enlightenment. This path encompasses ethical conduct, mental cultivation, and wisdom, providing a comprehensive framework for inner transformation.

In particular, right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), and right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) are essential for cultivating inner peace. Right effort involves the conscious decision to abandon unwholesome mental states and cultivate wholesome ones, while right mindfulness enables practitioners to remain present and aware, preventing distractions that lead to mental disturbance. Right concentration helps develop a stable and focused mind, free from the agitation of scattered thoughts.¹⁴

¹¹ *Dhp* (1998), p. 113.

¹² Analayo, B. (2017), p. 78.

¹³ Gombrich (2009), p. 96.

¹⁴ Harvey (2018), p. 53.

By following this path, individuals gradually eliminate the mental defilements that obstruct peace, allowing them to experience deeper levels of serenity and clarity. The Eightfold Path offers a holistic approach that encompasses both mental training and ethical cultivation, reinforcing the idea that inner peace cannot be separated from moral living.

V. PEACE AND SOCIAL HARMONY

Finally, Buddhism teaches that personal transformation through the cultivation of inner peace is directly connected to social and global peace. As individuals attain inner freedom from conflict and emotional turmoil, they become better equipped to foster peaceful relationships with others. The Buddhist worldview holds that individual peace extends outward, influencing the wider world and suggesting that societal harmony can be achieved when enough individuals have cultivated inner peace.¹⁵

The Buddha himself was a living example of this, advocating compassion and non-violence (*ahimsa*) in all actions. In his teachings, he emphasized the importance of the right speech, right action, and right livelihood in cultivating harmonious societies. When individuals embody these principles, they actively contribute to reducing harm and fostering peace in their communities.¹⁶

Moreover, the concept of *saṅgha*, or community, in Buddhism highlights the importance of mutual support in the practice of peace. The *saṅgha* is a community of practitioners who support one another on the path to enlightenment. By fostering peace within the community, the Buddhist path helps individuals recognize that their actions affect not only their well-being but also the well-being of the world as a whole.

VI. WORLD PEACE

In Buddhism, the concept of world peace is deeply connected to individual transformation. It suggests that peace in the world reflects the peace cultivated within individuals' hearts and minds. This philosophy emphasizes that harmony within societies, communities, and nations can only be realized when individuals commit to cultivating ethical behavior, mindfulness, and compassion. Buddhist teachings assert that true societal harmony arises when each person strives for personal peace through the development of virtues such as generosity, moral discipline, and loving-kindness.¹⁷

Buddhism emphasizes the deep connection between personal virtue and collective societal harmony. It suggests that when individuals cultivate ethical practices, these qualities naturally extend outward, fostering a more peaceful and cooperative society. The interdependence of personal and social peace is reflected in the Buddha's teachings, which advocate for a moral and compassionate way of life that not only enhances individual well-being but

¹⁵ Dalai Lama (1999), p. 107-120.

¹⁶ Bodhi, B. (2011), p. 45.

¹⁷ Harvey (2018), p. 55.

also promotes the welfare of the collective.¹⁸

VII. THE ROLE OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP

The *Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sūtra*, a pivotal text in Buddhist thought, provides key insights into the principles underlying world peace. This *sūtra* emphasizes that a harmonious relationship between rulers and citizens is essential for peace to flourish within a society. It states: “When the ruler and citizens practice right conduct, there is no conflict in the land, and peace reigns.”¹⁹

This teaching emphasizes that both virtuous leadership and responsible citizenship are essential for maintaining social stability and harmony. In the Buddhist worldview, leaders who embody ethical principles inspire their subjects to adopt similar virtues, creating a ripple effect that influences the entire society. Leaders are regarded not only as political figures but also as moral exemplars whose actions can either uplift or destabilize their communities. When leaders practice qualities such as *dāna* (generosity), *sīla* (moral discipline), and *mettā* (loving-kindness), they set a powerful example for their followers, fostering a society built on cooperation, respect, and mutual support.²⁰ Likewise, ethical conduct among citizens is equally vital. Buddhism teaches that individuals should cultivate virtues that promote peaceful coexistence, including generosity, honesty, and patience. Such practices contribute to social harmony and help minimize conflict. Ultimately, the Buddhist ideal holds that world peace arises from the collective efforts of individuals who live in accordance with ethical principles. When both leaders and citizens uphold these values in their daily lives, they lay the foundation for a more stable and peaceful society.²¹

VIII. ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF SOCIETAL DISCORD

The *Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sūtra* also emphasizes the need to address the root causes of societal conflict - namely, greed, hatred, and ignorance. These mental defilements are considered the primary sources of discord as they drive individuals to act out of self-interest, anger, and misunderstanding. Buddhism teaches that to establish a compassionate and peaceful world, these root causes must be eradicated.²²

To this end, Buddhist practice emphasizes the cultivation of wisdom (*prajñā*), ethical conduct (*sīla*), and mental discipline (*samādhi*) to counteract these defilements. By overcoming greed, hatred, and ignorance within themselves, individuals contribute to the creation of a more just and peaceful society. In this way, personal transformation becomes the foundation for societal change. When individuals refrain from actions driven by greed, aversion, and delusion, they cultivate an environment of trust, cooperation,

¹⁸ Rahula, w. (2007), p. 48.

¹⁹ *Dhp* (1998), p. 175.

²⁰ Bodhi, B. (2011), p. 31.

²¹ Gombrich (2009), p. 213.

²² Harvey (2018), p. 103.

and mutual respect, paving the way for peace to flourish.²³

Buddhism also emphasizes the importance of *samyak-karmā* (right action) and *samyak-vāc* (right speech) in fostering world peace. As key components of the Noble Eightfold Path, these principles encourage individuals to avoid harmful actions and speech while engaging in practices that promote understanding and harmony. By adhering to these ethical guidelines, individuals help cultivate a society rooted in peace, justice, and compassion.²⁴

IX. SUSTAINABLE PEACE: BEYOND THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT

The Buddhist perspective on world peace extends beyond the mere absence of war or conflict. It asserts that true world peace requires the presence of justice, equity, and mutual respect among individuals and groups. Ending conflict is not enough; one must actively cultivate compassion, understanding, and cooperation to create lasting harmony.²⁵

From a Buddhist perspective, world peace is deeply intertwined with the establishment of a compassionate world order in which all beings are treated with dignity and respect. This peace is not merely a political or social ideal but a way of life that permeates all levels of society – from individuals to communities to nations. The Buddhist vision of world peace calls for active engagement in fostering a world where understanding and harmony replace hatred and division and where the well-being of all beings is held paramount.²⁶

In conclusion, the Buddhist concept of world peace teaches that true peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of ethical conduct, mindfulness, and compassion at every level of society. It reflects the transformation of individuals, communities, and nations, where inner peace gives rise to societal harmony. By addressing the root causes of conflict and cultivating virtues such as generosity, moral discipline, and loving-kindness, individuals contribute to the creation of a world in which justice, harmony, and compassion prevail.²⁷

X. MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION AS TOOLS FOR CULTIVATING PEACE

Mindfulness (*sati*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*) are fundamental practices in Buddhism, serving as powerful tools for cultivating inner peace and transforming the mind. These practices not only enhance clarity of thought and emotional balance but also play a pivotal role in alleviating mental disturbances, which are the root causes of suffering. Through sustained mindfulness and meditation, individuals develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world, fostering compassion and harmony both within and beyond.

10.1. *Satipaṭṭhāna Sūtra* (The foundations of mindfulness)

The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sūtra* provides a comprehensive framework for

²³ Bodhi, B. (2011), p. 45.

²⁴ Gethin (1998), p. 135.

²⁵ Rahula, W. (2007), p. 76.

²⁶ Harvey (2018): 87.

²⁷ Bodhi, B. (2011): 62.

mindfulness practice, outlining the four foundations: mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), mind (*cittānupassanā*), and mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*). This practice allows individuals to observe their experiences non-reactively, cultivating wisdom through direct insight into impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*).

The *sūtra* emphasizes the transformative power of mindfulness, as reflected in the verse: “Mindfulness is the path to the deathless; heedlessness is the path to death. The mindful do not die; the heedless are as if already dead.”²⁸

This teaching highlights the essential role of mindfulness in attaining liberation from suffering. Through consistent practice, individuals learn to disengage from attachment and aversion, cultivating a serene and balanced mind that serves as the foundation for inner peace.

10.2. Meditation practices

Buddhist meditation consists of two primary forms: *samatha* (calm abiding) and *vipassanā* (insight). These complementary practices cultivate concentration, heightened awareness, and deep understanding. *Samatha* meditation: As described in the *Visuddhimagga*, *samatha* meditation cultivates mental calm by maintaining focused attention on a single object, such as the breath. This practice strengthens *samādhi* (concentration), providing the foundation for deeper mental clarity and tranquility. *Vipassanā* Meditation: Complementing *samatha*, *vipassanā* meditation cultivates deep insight into the true nature of reality by observing impermanence, suffering, and non-self in all phenomena. As described in the *Visuddhimagga*, *vipassanā* unveils the conditioned nature of existence, enabling practitioners to transcend ignorance and attachment.²⁹

By integrating *samatha* and *vipassanā*, individuals cultivate both profound mental stillness and deep insight, ultimately attaining liberation from the roots of suffering. These meditative practices are not only essential for personal transformation but also serve as a foundation for fostering a peaceful and compassionate society.

XI. ETHICAL CONDUCT AND THE PATH TO PEACE

Ethical conduct is a fundamental pillar of Buddhist practice, emphasizing the cultivation of virtuous behavior that nurtures both individual well-being and societal harmony. Rooted in compassion and wisdom, it serves as the ethical foundation for fostering peace at all levels. The Buddhist moral framework underscores personal responsibility and the far-reaching impact of one's actions. Central to this framework are the Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*) and the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*), which provide clear ethical guidelines for living a life of integrity and mindfulness.

11.1. The Five Precepts

The Five Precepts serve as the foundational ethical guidelines for lay

²⁸ Dīgha Nikāya (I): 45.

²⁹ Nanamoli (1991), p. 56.

Buddhists, fostering non-violence, honesty, and self-discipline. These precepts encourage individuals to cultivate moral integrity by refraining from killing living beings (*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*), taking what is not given (*adinnādānā veramaṇī*), engaging in sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*), speaking falsely (*musāvādā veramaṇī*), and consuming intoxicants that cloud the mind (*surāmeraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*).

This teaching highlights that ethical conduct is not merely a set of rules but a transformative practice that cultivates inner and outer peace. By adhering to these precepts, individuals contribute to harmonious relationships and the well-being of their communities. The *śīlakkhandhavagga* underscores this principle: “Those who refrain from harming others in thought, word, and deed, they are the peaceful ones.”³⁰

By adhering to these precepts, individuals foster an environment of trust and mutual respect, minimizing conflict and promoting peace at a societal level.

11.2. The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path presents a holistic framework for ethical conduct and mental cultivation, integrating moral behavior, mental discipline, and wisdom. Its ethical components - right speech (*sammā-vācā*), right action (*sammā-kammanta*), and right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*) - are fundamental to both personal and collective peace.³¹

The *Samyutta Nikāya* highlights the significance of these ethical principles: “Right speech, right action, and right livelihood lead to inner peace and harmony in the world.”³²

Right speech entails avoiding harmful language, including lies, gossip, and divisive or harsh words, while right action fosters kindness and respect for life. Right Livelihood encourages ethical professions that do not cause harm to others or the environment.

Together, the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path offer a practical framework for cultivating ethical behavior in alignment with Buddhist principles of nonviolence and compassion. By living ethically, individuals not only attain personal peace but also contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful world.

XII. THE ROLE OF COMPASSION (*KARUNĀ*) AND LOVING-KINDNESS (*METTĀ*) IN WORLD PEACE

Compassion (*karunā*) and loving-kindness (*mettā*) are central tenets of Buddhist philosophy and practice, emphasizing the cultivation of selfless love and empathy for all beings. These qualities not only transform individuals but also lay the foundation for resolving conflicts, healing divisions, and fostering

³⁰ *Dīgha Nikāya* I (2020), p. 89.

³¹ Bodhi, B. (2017), p. 155.

³² *Samyutta Nikāya* 2 (2020), p. 58.

global harmony.³³

12.1. Compassion (*karunā*)

Compassion is the sincere wish to alleviate the suffering of others. It is not confined to personal interactions but extends universally, inspiring individuals to act with kindness and understanding in all situations. The Buddha emphasized compassion as a vital means to reduce suffering and cultivate peace.

In the *Karunā Sūtra*, the Buddha states: “The compassionate mind, free from hatred, leads to the cessation of suffering for both oneself and others.”³⁴

This teaching underscores that compassion begins with a transformation of the heart, extending beyond selfish concerns to embrace the well-being of others. By cultivating *karunā*, individuals deepen their connection with others, breaking down barriers of anger and division and thereby contributing to both societal and global peace.

12.2. Loving-kindness (*mettā*)

Loving-kindness (*mettā*) is the practice of extending unconditional goodwill and love to all beings, regardless of their actions or identity. It dissolves hatred and fosters harmony. Unlike compassion, which arises in response to suffering, *mettā* is a proactive wish for the happiness and well-being of all beings.

The *Mettā Sūtra* captures the essence of this practice: “May all beings be happy. May all beings be free from suffering.”³⁵

Practicing *mettā* involves radiating love and kindness to oneself, loved ones, neutral individuals, and even those regarded as adversaries. This gradual expansion of loving-kindness dissolves prejudice while fostering mutual respect and understanding. When practiced widely, *mettā* has the power to cultivate a culture of peace, bridge divides, and unite communities.³⁶

12.3. The global relevance of *karunā* and *mettā*

In a world often plagued by conflict and division, the Buddhist practices of *karunā* and *mettā* offer timeless solutions for fostering empathy, understanding, and unity. By transforming individual hearts and minds, these practices create ripple effects that shape societal attitudes and cultivate an environment where peace is not just an ideal but a lived reality.

12.4. The *Theravāda* perspective on conflict resolution

Buddhism, particularly the *Theravāda* tradition, offers profound guidance on conflict resolution, emphasizing wisdom, compassion, and ethical conduct as means to foster harmony in society. Buddhist texts and teachings not only focus on individual transformation but also underscore the roles of leaders and communities in cultivating a peaceful world.

³³ Bodhi, B. (2005), p. 290 - 296.

³⁴ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* 5 (2020), p. 256.

³⁵ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* I. (2020), p. 24.

³⁶ Bodhi, B. (1994), p. 98.

12.5. Resolving conflict with wisdom and compassion

Buddhist philosophy asserts that wisdom (*paññā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) are essential for resolving disputes. The Jataka Tales, which narrate the Buddha's previous lives, provide practical examples of conflict resolution rooted in these values.

In the Jataka Tale of the Grateful Deer, the Bodhisattva (the Buddha in a past life) mediates a conflict between a hunter and a deer. Instead of escalating the situation, the Bodhisattva appeals to the hunter's sense of compassion and wisdom, leading to a peaceful resolution. The tale emphasizes: "He who overcomes anger with kindness and hatred with compassion brings peace to the world."³⁷

This story illustrates the transformative power of responding to conflict with empathy rather than retaliation, serving as a compelling example for resolving disputes in both personal and societal contexts.

XIII. THE ROLE OF LEADERS

Buddhist teachings also emphasize the crucial role of leaders in fostering societal peace. The *Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sūtra* describes the qualities of a righteous ruler, known as a *Dhamma-raja*, who governs with wisdom, ethical integrity, and a deep sense of responsibility for the well-being of all.

The text states: "A king who governs according to Dhamma will bring peace to the realm, and those who follow Dhamma will live in harmony."³⁸

A leader's commitment to Dhamma principles - such as justice, compassion, and nonviolence - sets the tone for society. When leaders act ethically, they inspire their people to do the same, fostering an environment where peace and harmony prevail.

Practical Application in Modern Contexts: The Theravāda approach to conflict resolution offers valuable lessons for contemporary society. Whether in interpersonal disputes or broader societal conflicts, applying wisdom, compassion, and ethical leadership fosters more constructive and lasting solutions. These principles promote dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect, paving the way for peaceful coexistence.

XIV. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION: CULTIVATING PEACE IN THE MODERN WORLD

Buddhism provides valuable guidance for tackling contemporary global challenges such as violence, inequality, and environmental destruction. Its teachings emphasize mindfulness, compassion, and nonviolence as essential tools for addressing these issues on both individual and collective levels.

14.1. Global challenges

In the face of modern challenges such as social unrest, inequality, and environmental degradation, Buddhist teachings offer essential tools for

³⁷ Jataka, (1993), p. 171.

³⁸ *Dīgha Nikāya*, III (2020), p. 216.

personal and social transformation. Mindfulness practices cultivate awareness of emotions, thoughts, and actions, fostering emotional intelligence and resilience. These qualities are crucial for reducing stress, enhancing social relationships, and resolving conflicts in a peaceful, constructive manner.³⁹

Additionally, Buddhist principles such as compassion (*karuṇā*) and nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*) encourage individuals to approach challenges with empathy and understanding. This compassionate outlook not only nurtures inner peace but also fosters a harmonious society where conflicts are resolved through dialogue and respect rather than aggression. By cultivating peaceful minds, individuals become agents of positive change, actively working to address pressing global issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change.

Buddhism's deep understanding of interconnectedness underscores the recognition that individual actions shape the collective world. As people cultivate mindfulness and compassion, their actions extend beyond the personal, creating ripple effects that foster a more harmonious society and environment.

14.2. Buddhist global peace initiatives

Contemporary Buddhist leaders like Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama have applied Buddhist principles - such as mindfulness, nonviolence, and compassion - to global peace efforts. Thich Nhat Hanh's concept of "engaged Buddhism" emphasizes integrating mindfulness and compassion into social, political, and environmental issues. By encouraging mindful and nonviolent action, he advocates for peace through personal transformation and collective efforts.⁴⁰

The Dalai Lama has been a leading advocate for peace, emphasizing the importance of nonviolence and compassion in global politics. His efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and human rights have helped foster peace and understanding across cultures and religions. Both leaders emphasize that peace begins with the individual and expands outward through mindful actions and compassionate living.⁴¹

These Buddhist leaders continue to advocate for a world where peace is cultivated not only through individual transformation but also through collective action, emphasizing the deep connection between personal and global peace. Their work demonstrates that by applying Buddhist principles in daily life and social engagement, we can address global crises such as violence, inequality, and environmental destruction.

XV. CONCLUSION

Moreover, the Buddhist path to peace is not a passive or abstract concept but a practical and active pursuit that requires conscious effort. It calls for the cultivation of mental and emotional discipline, the continuous practice

³⁹ Kabat-Zinn (1990), p. 78.

⁴⁰ Thich Nhat Hanh (1999), p. 214 - 216.

⁴¹ Dalai Lama (1999), p. 56.

of ethical conduct, and the nurturing of virtues such as loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These qualities not only benefit the individual but also ripple outward, positively influencing relationships, communities, and society at large. By addressing the root causes of suffering - attachment, aversion, and ignorance - Buddhism encourages individuals to transcend self-centered perspectives and cultivate a broader, more compassionate worldview. The role of meditation and mindfulness in this process cannot be overstated. Through regular practice, individuals develop the ability to observe their thoughts, emotions, and reactions without attachment or identification, fostering clarity, wisdom, and inner peace. This mental clarity is essential for navigating life's complexities and responding to challenges with equanimity and wisdom rather than reactivity.

Furthermore, the Buddhist notion of peace extends to social responsibility and collective well-being. As individuals transform themselves through these practices, they become agents of change in the world. The Buddhist community (*Saṅgha*) exemplifies mutual support, where practitioners help one another in their pursuit of enlightenment and peace. This collective effort creates a ripple effect, fostering broader societal transformations rooted in ethical conduct and harmonious coexistence. Ultimately, Buddhism presents a holistic vision of peace that encompasses personal, social, and global dimensions, teaching that world peace begins with each individual's inner transformation. Through mindful awareness, ethical living, and the cultivation of compassion, individuals contribute to a world not only free from violence and conflict but also grounded in justice, mutual respect, and genuine harmony. By embracing these teachings, both individuals and societies can move toward a future where peace, in all its forms, becomes a lived reality.

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SOFT POWER POLITICS OF INDIAN DHAMMA ASHOK AS UNITY IN DIVERSITY FOR CULTIVATING INNER PEACE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Abstract:

Despite the lasting difference, the phrase Unity in diversity refers to a condition of cohesion or integrity. Individual differences in physical characteristics, skin color, castes, faith, culture, religions, traditions, and so on are not considered a source of contention in the concept of unity in variety. Instead, these distinctions are regarded as variations that benefit Society and the country. Ujjain Hindustani pronunciation: is a city in Ujjain district of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. Thus, Meditation is a great way to slow down in a busy world. Even a few minutes a day of meditation and mindfulness can help you better yourself and improve your mental health. A study published in the Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine found that meditation can improve anxiety, depression, and pain scores, especially during times of crisis. It can also help lower stress. Many iconic personalities like Charak, Kashyap, Dhanvantri, Vagbhatt etc followed Jeevak and went onto write books on Ayurveda. Unlike, Hippocrates, Jeevak's legacy did not find a 'school of medicine' and popularize his methods. Ashoka is regarded as one of ancient India's finest kings for his public welfare programmes. He formulated the Dhamma and motivated everyone, including his subjects, to follow it. Ashoka's Dhamma was not a specific religious belief or practice, nor was it an arbitrarily devised royal policy. Dharma is concerned with generalised social norms and practices.

Keywords: *Soft power, Jeevak, Ujjain, meditation, world peace.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

On international level politics which has ability to co-opt rather than coerce (in contrast with hard power) is called soft power. It involves shaping the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. Soft power is non-coercive, using culture, political values, and foreign policies to enact change. In 2012, Joseph Nye of Harvard University explained that with soft power, “the best propaganda is not propaganda”, further explaining that during the Information Age, “credibility is the scarcest resource”¹. Nye popularised the term in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*.² Soft power contrasts with “hard power” - the use of coercion and payment. Soft power can be wielded not just by states but also by all actors in international politics, such as NGOs or international institutions.³ It is also considered by some an example of the “second face of power”⁴ that indirectly allows one to obtain the outcomes one wants.⁵ A country’s soft power, according to Nye, rests on three resources: “its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies” (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority).

An initial undertaking to measure soft power through a composite index was published by the Institute for Government (IfG) and the media company Monocle in 2010.⁶ The success of soft power heavily depends on the actor’s reputation within the international community, as well as the flow of information between actors. Thus, soft power is often associated with the rise of globalization and neoliberal international relations theory. Popular culture and mass media are regularly identified as a source of soft power,⁷ The Soviet Union competed with the U.S. for influence throughout the Cold War. The Soviets were engaged in a broad campaign to convince the world of the attractiveness of its Communist system. In 1945, the Soviet Union was

¹ Nye, Joseph (8 May 2012). “China’s Soft Power Deficit To catch up, its politics must unleash the many talents of its civil society”. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved 6 December 2014.

² Nye, Joseph S. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Art of Mentoring Series (reprint ed.). Basic Books. ISBN 9780465001774. Retrieved 1 March 2020.

³ Nye, Joseph S. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*. Hachette UK (published 2009). ISBN 9780786738960. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 1 March 2020 – via Google Books.

⁴ Parlak, Bekir, ed. (15 October 2022). *The Handbook of Public Administration*, Vol. 2. Livre de Lyon. 346. ISBN 9782382363003. Retrieved 16 March 2023. The second face of power is soft power.

⁵ Sobrinho, Blasco José (2001). *Signs, Solidarities, and Sociology: Charles S. Peirce and the Pragmatics of Globalization*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield. 115. ISBN 9780847691791.

⁶ McClory, Jonathan (2010 - 12-07). “The new persuaders: an international ranking of soft power”. *Institute for Government website*. Institute for Government. 13

⁷ Economic warfare on the silver screen. FRANCE 24. 28 June 2011. Archived from the original on 19 January 2012. Retrieved 2012-01-28.

very effective in attracting many in Europe from its resistance to Hitler, and in colonized areas around the world because of its opposition to European imperialism.⁸ The Soviets also employed a substantially large public diplomacy program that included: promoting their high culture, broadcasting, disseminating information about the West, and sponsoring nuclear protests, peace movements, and youth organizations. Despite all of this, the Soviets' closed system and lack of popular culture impeded the ability of the Soviet Union to compete with the U.S. in terms of soft power.⁹ According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Commonwealth Government, Australia maintains a good reputation thanks to "its democracy, rule of law, strong economy, quality education, cutting-edge science, multiculturalism and environmental protections", enabling to its citizens and institutions to "speak with confidence and credibility in the world stage". Having the ability to influence the behavior or thinking of others through the power of attraction and ideas is also vital to our foreign policy. This is known as soft power. Australia's ability to persuade and influence others is underpinned by some enduring strengths.

II. METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF STUDY

When whole World is enjoying the comfort of materialist life created mental tension in one and more persons in family. For those who are govern with modern equipments, much and more hours spending of screen. Thus such situations where less physical work and spending more and more time in one posture also get increased in day to day life. For those as well as in all walk of life concentration on meditation, yoga or any other kind of physical movement help one and all as directed by our forefathers through various techniques. During last several decades in past half century of modern World as well as those practicing any kind of meditation by generation could get help in their day to day life.

China's traditional culture has been a source of attraction, building on which it has created several hundred Confucius Institutes around the world to teach its language and culture. The enrollment of foreign students in China has increased from 36,000 a decade before to at least 240,000 in 2010 Jr.¹⁰ China is the most popular country in Asia for international students,¹¹ the leading destination globally for Anglophone African students¹² and the second most popular education powerhouse in the world (China' 2020). According to a

⁸ Như trên.

⁹ Babiracki, Patryk (2015). *Soviet soft power in Poland: culture and the making of Stalin's new empire, 1943-1957*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

¹⁰ Nye Jr, Joseph S. (2012-01-17). "Opinion | Why China Is Weak on Soft Power". The New York Times. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved 2024-07-10.

¹¹ International Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends. WENR. 2007-10-01. Archived from the original on 2020-08-13. Retrieved 2020-09-11.

¹² Breeze, Victoria; Moore, Nathan (27 June 2017). "The Conversation. Archived from the original on 9 November 2021. Retrieved 18 February 2018."

2018 study in the *American Sociological Review*, France had greater influence on European geopolitics than Britain in the 18th century because of its cultural and symbolic power.¹³ Germany had the eighth largest diplomatic network in the world through culture, sport, cuisine, design, diplomacy and beyond.¹⁴ The five pillars of India's soft power – dignity, dialogue, shared prosperity, regional and global security, and cultural and civilizational links – are strategically employed to enhance its global influence.¹⁵ The soft power of India in Africa has been reflected in cultural exchanges, including the influence of Bollywood movies, the spread of yoga practices, and the involvement of the Indian Diaspora.¹⁶ The elements of Italian soft culture are its art, music, fashion, design, and food. Italy was the birthplace of opera,¹⁷ and for generations the language of opera was Italian. Popular tastes in drama in Italy have long favored comedy; the improvisational style known as the *Commedia dell'arte* began in Italy in the mid-16th century¹⁸ and is still performed today. “CoolJapan” is a concept coined in 2002 as an expression of Japan's popular culture. The concept has been adopted by the Japanese government as well as trade bodies seeking to exploit the commercial capital of the country's culture industry. Besides increasing the amount of exports, the Korean Wave is used by the government as a soft power tool to engage with the masses of young people all over the world.¹⁹

The main power of the Age of Discovery, Spain began the conquest of the New World in 1492, giving rise to the Spanish Empire. Controlling vast portions of the Americas, parts of Africa, various territories in Asia, Oceania, as well as territory in other parts of Europe, the Spanish Empire became, in conjunction with the Portuguese, the first empire to achieve a global scale and one of the largest empires in history. Since the 1814 – 1914 century of Pax Britannica the foreign relations of the United Kingdom has held a significant soft power component.²⁰

¹³ Brundage, Jonah Stuart (2018). “The Social Sources of Geopolitical Power: French and British Diplomacy and the Politics of Interstate Recognition, 1689 to 1789”. *American Sociological Review*. 83 (6): 1254 – 1280. doi:10.1177/0003122418811264. ISSN 0003-1224. JSTOR 48588591. S2CID 219951985

¹⁴ Global Diplomacy Index – Country Rank. Lowy Institute. Archived from the original on 2019-02-01. Retrieved 2020-10-14.

¹⁵ Amb (Retd) Bhaswati Mukherjee, 2019 “India's Culture Diplomacy and Soft Power,” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

¹⁶ Viswanathan, H.H.S. 2019 “India's Soft Power Diplomacy,” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, September 04, 2019.

¹⁷ Kimbell, David R. B. 1994. *Italian Opera*. Archived 2022-10-11 at the Wayback Machine Cambridge University Press, 1994. 1.

¹⁸ *Commedia dell'arte*. 2021 Treccani, il portale del sapere (in Italian). Archived from the original on 4 November 2021. Retrieved 24 Jul 2012.

¹⁹ Sondhaus, Lawrence (2009). *Soft power, hard power, and the Pax Americana*. Taylor & Francis. 204 – 8.

²⁰ Sondhaus, Lawrence (2009). *Soft power, hard power, and the Pax Americana*. Taylor & Francis. 204 – 8.

The foreign relations of the United States has long had a great deal of soft power. Examples of the impact include Franklin D. Roosevelt's four freedoms in Europe to motivate the Allies in World War II; people behind the Iron Curtain listening to the government's foreign propaganda arm Radio Free Europe; newly liberated Afghans in 2001 asking for a copy of the Bill of Rights and young Afghans today surreptitiously watching banned American videos and satellite television broadcasts in the privacy of their homes. America's early commitment to religious toleration, for example, was a powerful element of its overall appeal to potential immigrants; and American aid in the reconstruction of Europe after World War II was a propaganda victory to show off the prosperity and the generosity of the people of the United States. India is a country that celebrates its variety while remaining united. Mountain ranges, monsoon, irrigated agricultural lands, rivers, streams, forests, and deserts have all contributed to India's exceptional diversity among people of diverse races, castes, creeds, religions, and languages. Each state and region has its distinct color, culture, and climate. Dance and music, colorful festivals, and stunning handiworks enchant visitors from all over the world. Beaches in Goa, backwaters in Kerala, snow-capped mountains in Himachal, beaches, and lakes in Kashmir, historical attractions in Delhi, and so on are symbols of our country's diversity. India, a major player in the globe today, has used its unique soft power resources, including its diaspora, yoga, Buddhism, and financial support, to advance its national interests and win diplomatic wins. In this article, we'll discuss how India is boosting its standing globally and the growing significance of its soft power. We will examine a number of significant actions and choices made by the Modi administration to accelerate the soft power of India's stagnant growth. We'll begin by discussing India's diplomatic history, including its use of soft power, from ancient times through British India and modern India. It will include the development of India's soft power and how to better use India's cultural heritage to gain global influence.²¹

This is called Unity in Diversity. Despite the lasting difference, the word Unity in diversity refers to a condition of cohesion or integrity. Individual differences in physical characteristics, skin color, castes, faith, culture, religions, traditions, and so on are not considered a source of contention in the concept of unity in variety. Instead, these distinctions are regarded as variations that benefit Society and the country. Ujjain Hindustani pronunciation: is a city in Ujjain district of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. It is the fifth-largest city in Madhya Pradesh by population and is the administrative centre of Ujjain district and Ujjain division. It is one of the pilgrimage centres of Sapta Puri famous for the Kumbh Mela held there every 12 years.

The famous ancient buddhist Temple²² is located in the center of the city Ujjain. An ancient city situated on the eastern bank of the Shipra River, Ujjain

²¹ Monica, 2022. The Rise of India's Soft Power Approach to Global Politics <https://usanafoundation.com/the-rise-of-indias-soft-power-approach-to-global-politics>

²² Itsing ki bharat yatra Samyak Prakashan page 106 ISBN :978-93-89849-96-7.

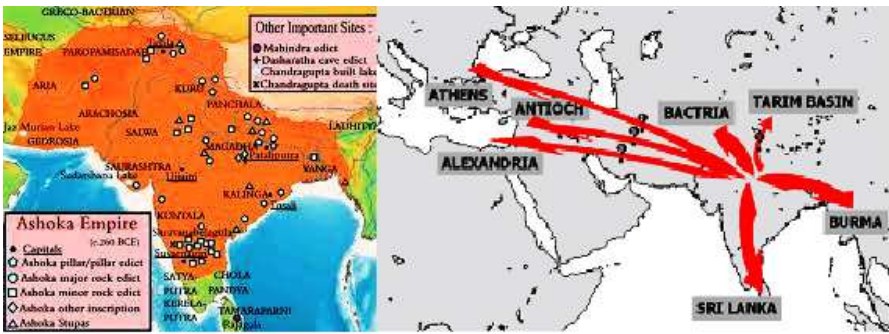
was the most prominent city on the Malwa plateau of central India for much of its history. It emerged as the political centre of central India around 600 BCE. It was the capital of the ancient Avantik kingdom, one of the sixteen mahajanapadas. It remained an important political, commercial and cultural centre of central India until the early 19th century, when the British administrators decided to develop Indore as an alternative to it. Ujjain continues to be an important place of pilgrimage for buddhism Shaivites, Vaishnavites and followers of Shakta. Ujjain has been selected as one of the hundred Indian cities to be developed as a smart city under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship Smart Cities Mission. Excavations at Kayatha (around 26 km from Ujjain) have revealed chalcolithic agricultural settlements dating to around 2000 BCE. Chalcolithic sites have also been discovered at other areas around Ujjain, including Nagda, but excavations at Ujjain itself have not revealed any chalcolithic settlements. Archaeologist H. D. Sankalia theorized that the chalcolithic settlements at Ujjain were probably destroyed by the Iron Age settlers.²³ The Chalcolithic (also called the Copper Age and Eneolithic) was an archaeological period characterized by the increasing use of smelted copper. It followed the Neolithic and preceded the Bronze Age. It occurred at different periods in different areas, but was absent in some parts of the world, such as Russia, where there was no well-defined Copper Age between the Stone and Bronze Ages²⁴ Stone tools were still predominantly used during this period.²⁵ The multiple names result from multiple definitions of the period. Originally, the term Bronze Age meant that either copper or bronze was being used as the chief hard substance for the manufacture of tools and weapons. Ancient writers, who provided the essential cultural references for educated people during the 19th century, used the same name for both copper- and bronze-using ages.²⁶ The concept of the Copper Age was put forward by Hungarian scientist **Ferenc Pulszky** in the 1870s, when, on the basis of the significant number of large copper objects unearthed within the **Carpathian Basin**, he suggested that the previous threefold division of the **Prehistoric Age** – the **Stone**, Bronze and **Iron Ages** – should be further divided with the introduction of the Copper Age.

²³ Kulke, Hermann; Rothermund, Dietmar (2004). *A History of India*. Psychology Press. 50 – 51. ISBN 978-0-41532-920-0.

²⁴ Chalcolithic. British Museum. Retrieved 12 August 2023.

²⁵ Pearsall, Judy (1998). "Chalcolithic". *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Clarendon Press 301.

²⁶ Pearce, Mark (1 September 2019). "The 'Copper Age' – a history of the concept". *Journal of World Prehistory*. 32 (3): 229–250. doi:10.1007/s10963-019-09134-z. ISSN 1573-7802.



According to Hermann Kulke²⁷ and Dietmar Rothermund, Avanti, whose capital was Ujjain, “was one of the earliest outposts in central India” and showed signs of early incipient urbanisation around 700 BCE.²⁸ Around 600 BCE, Ujjain emerged as the political, commercial and cultural centre of Malwa plateau. The ancient walled city of Ujjain was located around the Garh Kalika hill on the bank of river Kshipra, in the present-day suburban areas of the Ujjain city. This city covered an irregular pentagonal area of 0.875 km². It was surrounded by a 12 m high mud rampart. The archaeological investigations have also indicated the presence of a 45 m wide and 6.6 m deep moat around the city. According to F. R. Allchin and George Erdosy, these city defences were constructed between 6th and 4th centuries BCE. Dieter Schlingloff believes that these were built before 600 BCE. This period is characterised by structures made of stone and burnt-brick, tools and weapons made of iron, and black and red burnished ware.²⁹ According to the Puranic texts, a branch of the legendary Haihaya dynasty ruled over Ujjain. The Mahavira Tapo Bhumi. In the 4th century BCE, the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta annexed Avanti to his empire. The edicts of his grandson Ashoka mention four provinces of the Mauryan empire, of which Ujjain was the capital of the Western province (Klaus, 2016). During the reign of his father Bindusara, Ashoka served as the viceroy of Ujjain,^[16] which highlights the importance of the town.³⁰ As the viceroy of Ujjain, Ashoka married Devi, the daughter of a merchant from Vedisagiri (Vidisha). According to the Sinhalese Buddhist tradition, their children Mahendra and Sanghamitra, who preached Buddhism in modern Sri Lanka, were born in Ujjain.³¹ Mahatheri Sanghamitra along with her eleven nuns

²⁷ Kulke, Hermann; Rothermund, Dietmar (2004). *A History of India*. Psychology Press. 50 – 51.

²⁸ Jain Kailash Chand (1972). “Malwa Through the Ages, from the Earliest Times to 1305 A. D.”. Motilal Banarsidass. 90. ISBN 9788120808249.

²⁹ Klaus Schlichtmann (2016). *A Peace History of India: From Ashoka Maurya to Mahatma Gandhi*. Vij Books.

³⁰ Mookerji Radhakumud (1962). *Asoka*. Motilal Banarsidass. 8. ISBN 978-81-208-0582-8.

³¹ Subramani, Dr. Vijaya (September 2018). “Ujjain, a brilliant sliver of heaven on earth”. *Tatvaloka*. Sringeri: Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamigal Educational Trust. XLI (6): 40 – 3.

(bhikkuni) established the southern branch of the Mahabodhi tree³² in the Island of Shrilanka. From the Mauryan period, Northern Black Polished Ware, copper coins, terracotta ring wells and ivory seals with Brahmi text have been excavated at Ujjain (Jain, 1972). Ujjain emerged as an important commercial centre, partially because it lay on the trade route connecting north India to the Deccan, starting from Mathura. It also emerged as an important center for intellectual learning among Jain, Buddhist and Hindu traditions. After the Mauryans, Ujjain was controlled by a number of empires and dynasties, including local dynasties, the Shungas, the Western Satraps, the Satavahanas, and the Guptas.



Jeevak Kaumarbhritya (525 - 450 B. C), contemporary of Gautama Buddha, can be considered as historical 'Father of Medicine'. He was famous during his period and treated many monks and kings like Buddha, King Bimbisara, King Chand Pradyot. Entire Tripitak literature in Pali language describes about 'medical miracles' of Jeevak. His soft power service can be consider for mankind and welfare of Ancient resident of India. *Jivaka* (Pali: *Jivaka Komārabhacca*; Sanskrit: *Jivaka Kaumārabhṛtya*) (Salguero, 2009)³⁴ was the personal physician (Sanskrit: *vaidya*) of the Buddha and the Indian King Bimbisāra. He lived in Rājagṛha, present-day Rajgir, in the 5th century BCE. Sometimes described as the "Medicine King" and (pinyin: yi wang) and "Thrice Crowned physician"³³ he figures prominently in legendary accounts in Asia as a model healer, and is honoured as such by traditional healers in several Asian countries.

Early Life of Jeevak Kaumarbhritya - He was found as an abandoned orphan at a roadside in Rajgrih (Rajgir) to prince of Magadh. The prince (Kaumar/ Kumar) found him Jeevit (alive) even after being abandoned and has served (Bhritya) him. Thus, his name became Jeevak Kaumarbhritya. He went to Takshila (which is now in Pakistan) for his higher studies a place which could be called as the "first university of the world" and was famous for its specialized study. He studied the whole 8-limbed Ayurveda (Medical

³² Deepvansh smyak prakashanno. 245 - 3.

³³ Salguero, C. Pierce (2009), "The Buddhist Medicine King in Literary Context: Re-considering an Early Medieval Example of Indian Influence on Chinese Medicine and Surgery", History of Religions, 48 (3): 183–210, doi:10.1086/598230, JSTOR 10.1086/598230, S2CID 162211011

science of 8 subjects) there for many years. Ultimately he became a great maser and research scholar of this subject. His intelligence and skill are known through different case studies in his life.

Case 1 – “Every plant is a medicine”:- When his studies were done, the mentor of Jeevak examined him by giving a project. The task was to find a useless plant in the 5 miles’ circumference of Takshila. Jeevak wandered everywhere and reported in conclusion that “Every plant has medicinal and other uses; no plant is useless.” The teacher was extremely delighted to listen his answer.

Case 2 – “Treating a chronic headache through medicinal ghee”:- When Jeevak was returning to Magadh from Takshila, on the way he stayed at Saket (Ayodhya). The wife of a famous businessman (Shresthi) was suffering from chronic headache which was not cured by other doctors (Vaidyas). When he inserted medical ghee through her nose. She got relief within 3 days. The shresthi awarded him with 26,000 coins, chariots and servants. This was the first treatment in Jeevak’s career.

Case 3 – “Treating fistula of Magadh emperor Bimbasar”:- Bimbasar was suffering from fistula. Due to disease, his clothes get stained with blood. Which was witted by his queen. He became extremely sorrowful due to the pain of disease and the other reason was the humour of the queens. This mentally and physically sick king was treated by only one paste of Jeevak. The happy king awarded him with enormous property and appointed him on the post of Royal Doctor.

Case 4 – Jeevak successfully operated the most critical kind of Head Surgery

“Head Surgery of a Shresthi”:- A shresthi of Rajgrih has a chronic disease uncured by the Vaidyas. They speculated that shresthi would live five to seven days. Bimbasar appointed Jeevak on this case. Jeevak tied the patient to the left side for 7 days, on right side for 7 days and central mode for 7 days, then he pierced his skull and brought out two insects. Then he closed the brain, stitched it and did the bandage. The shresthi according to his promise offered him his whole property but Jeevak took only one lakh coins.

Case 5 – “Intestinal Surgery of a boy”:- The son of a shresthi of Varanasi had tumor in his intestine. He did not recover even after many treatments. When Jeevak came to see him, he moved his surgical tool on his stomach & brought out intestine. Then he cut off the tumor and stitched the intestine at it’s position. The boy recovered from disease.

Case 6 – “Treating the disease of Avanti king Chand Pradyot”:- King Chand Pradyot invited Jeevak from Rajgrih to Ujjain for his treatment. The king was furious in nature and Jeevak knew that fact. That’s why before giving the king medicine, he fled with Bhadravati elephantess with the excuse of bringing medicine for the king from the forest. As soon as the king took the medicine, seivere vomiting started. This made him very angry and thus he ordered to bring the Jeevak before him. But Jeevak using his tactical brain, reaches Rajgrih safely. After some time, Chand Pradyot recovered completely and rewarded Jeevak by sending a very costly pair of Sivayak garments to Rajgrih. Jeevak had

a big residence, which was also his Hospital in Rajgrih, whose ruins still exist in Rajgir as “Jeevak ambvan”, which literally means the mango orchard. The building was surrounded by the mango orchard where lord Buddha stayed with his disciples. Jeevak had introduced Ajatshatru to Gautama Buddha. Jeevak had even treated the lord Buddha once with his simple medicines.



Many iconic personalities like Charak, Kashyap, Dhanvantri, Vagbhatt etc followed Jeevak and went onto write books on Ayurveda. Unlike, Hippocrites, Jeevak’s legacy did not find ‘school of medicine’ and popularize his methods. That is why Jeevak Kaumarbhritya, who lived more than a century before Hippocrites (460 - 370 BC), was neglected by the world. But infact, he is the ‘Real Father of Medicine.

Ujjain remained as an important city of the Guptas during the 4th and the 5th centuries. Kalidasa, the great Indian classical poet of the 5th century who lived in the times of the Gupta king Vikramaditya wrote his epic work Meghadūta in which he describes the richness of Ujjain and its people. In the 6th century CE the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang visited India. He describes the ruler of Avanti as a king who was generous to the poor and presented them with gifts. The famous historical Buddhist temple mahakal in Ujjain is similar to the one describe by the sevenths century Chinese travller Itsing³⁴ in the big Buddhist vihars of Aparanacha India that-there a kitchen on the side of the pillar or in front of the porch, there is a two – three feet high statue of a deity carved in wood .It has a bag of gold in its hand, oil is always wiped on it. It’s face turns black and this deity is called mahakal. He naturally loves the three ratna” (*Buddhang saranang gachhami Dhammang saranang gachhami Sanghang saranang gachhami*). And protects the five councils (*Bhikku, Bhikkuni, sramner, sramneri, shikshamana*) from misfortune. All the wishes of his worshippers are fuifilled. Bharthari is said to have written his great epics, Virat Katha, Neeti Sataka, the love story of Pradyot Princess Vasavadatta and Udayan in Ujjayini, as the city was called during his times. According to research³⁵ Emperor Ashok changed the name of the city Avanti to Ujjaini. And in this context, the naming of Ashoka’s sons ‘Ujjainiya’ seems to be the reason for naming this capital of Avanti district

³⁴ Salguero, C. Pierce (2009), “The Buddhist Medicine King in Literary Context: Recon- sidering an Early Medieval Example of Indian Influence on Chinese Medicine and Surgery”, History of Religions, 48 (3): 6.

³⁵ Dr. Ramkumar Ahirwar book Ujjaini me Baudh Dharma page 7 Shivalik prakashan ISBN-978-93-83838-90-5

Ujjaini. The writings of Bhasa are set in Ujjain, and he probably lived in the city.^[21] Kalidasa also refers to Ujjain multiple times, and it appears that he spent at least a part of his life in Ujjain. *Mrichchhakatika* by Shudraka is also set in Ujjain. Ujjain also appears in several stories as the capital of the legendary emperor Vikramaditya. Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara* (11th century) mentions that the city was created by Vishwakarma, and describes it as invincible, prosperous and full of wonderful sights. Ujjain was sacked several times by the Arabs of the Umayyad Caliphate in the 8th century CE. The Arabs called the city Uzayn. Medieval period-The Jantar Mantar at Ujjain was commissioned by Jai Singh II (1688 - 1743) of Jaipur. The Paramaras (9th -14th century CE) shifted the region's capital from Ujjain to Dhar.³⁶ Mahmud of Ghazni sacked the city and forced it to pay tribute during his campaigns in India. In 1235 CE, Iltutmish of Delhi Sultanate plundered the city. With the decline of the Paramara kingdom, Ujjain ultimately came under the Islamic rule, like other parts of north-central India. The city continued to be an important city of central India. As late as during the times of the Mughal vassal Jai Singh II (1688 - 1743), who constructed a Jantar Mantar in the city, Ujjain was the largest city and capital of the Malwa Subah. The city continued to be developed during Muslim rule especially under the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, it was used as an important military headquarters (Sharma, 1995).

Ashoka is regarded as one of ancient India's finest kings for his public welfare programmes. He formulated the Dhamma and motivated everyone, including his subjects, to follow it. Ashoka's Dhamma was not a specific religious belief or practice, nor was it an arbitrarily devised royal policy. Dharma is concerned with generalised social norms and practices.

Dhamma (Pali recognized: *dhamma*; Sanskrit: recognized: *dharma*) is a set of edicts that formed a policy of the 3rd Mauryan emperor Ashoka the Great, who succeeded to the Mauryan throne in modern-day India around 269 B. C. E.³⁷ Ashoka is considered one of the greatest kings of ancient India for his policies of public welfare. There have been attempts to define and find equivalent English words for it, such as "piety", "moral life" and "righteousness" or "duty" but scholars could not translate it into English because it was coined and used in a specific context. The word Dhamma has multiple meanings in the literature and thought of ancient India. The best way to understand what Ashoka the great means by Dhamma is to read his edicts, which were written to explain the principles of Dhamma to the people of that time throughout the empire Romila³⁸ and Gupta.³⁹ Dhamma was not a particular religious

³⁶ Sharma Virendra Nath (1995). *Sawai Jai Singh and His Astronomy*. Motilal Banarsidass. 212. ISBN 9788120812567

³⁷ Ashoka the Great's Rule of India. Holistic Thought Education. Archived from the original on 25 August 2013. Retrieved 11 August 2013.

³⁸ Romila Thapar (2004). *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*. University of California Press. 200. ISBN 9780520242258.

³⁹ Gupta, K. Manohar (2005). *The Āryan Path of the Buddha*. Sundeep Prakashan. 170.

faith or practice, or an arbitrary formulated royal policy.⁴⁰ Dhamma related to generalized norms of social behavior and activities; Ashoka the great tried to synthesize various social norms which were current in his time. It cannot be understood by assuming it is one of the various religions that existed at that time. To understand why and how Ashoka the great formulated Dhamma and its meaning, one must understand the characteristics of the time in which he lived and to refer to Buddhist, Brahmanical and other texts where norms of social behavior are explained.

It is well-known that in circa 600 B. C. the process of second urbanization was accelerated in north India due to the discovery of iron. Gradually, some of the important towns of north gained importance and became the centre of power and also the centre of trade and religious propagation. Ujjayini, the capital town of Avanti - Janapada did not lag behind in attracting the people of all walks of life, as referred to in the epics, puranas as well as Buddhist and Jain literature. The cultural remains, and archaeological excavations, in the vicinity of Ujjayini, substantiate to "the fact. Inspired by these evidences the authorities of Archaeological Survey of India conducted an archaeological excavation at famous Gadhalika mound of Ujjayini near the river Kshipra in 1955. The result of excavations was fascinating throwing the flood of light upon the glorious past of Ujjayini. To add more we selected an unnoticed Buddhist site at village Sodafiga (Dist. Ujjain). It is situated at a distance of about eight kms. from modern town of Ujjain on Ujjain-Unhel road. Sonakottikan Bhikku lived in Sodanga was Pravajjit by Ayushmaan Mahakachchayan.⁴¹

Originally, it was a Buddhist establishment with a large stupa, monasteries and baolis etc. for the remains of which were traced and found during the course of excavations and explorations. Now the stupa is occupied by the modern huts, but half of it is open which was partly excavated by us. Prior to our excavation it was noticed by late vs. Wakankar and Dr. S. S. Nigam of Ujjain. The discovery of two component parts of the stone pillars viz. the elephant and lotus capital with Mauryan polish confirmed that probably the Mauryan king Ashoka erected the stone pillar over here looking to its importance but the shaft of the pillar is still missing. However, excavations of the stupa revealed four phases of activities at the mound as follows:- Firstly, the activities were started during the pre-Mauryan period which continued up to circa 200 B. C. We picked up the plain pottery with red wash and some sherds of the Northern Black Polished ware (N. B. P.); besides these the red ware and the Mauryan bricks were also collected. Further, the foundation of the stone wall was traced over red- murrum. In the second phase, ascribed to circa 200 B. C. to 75 A. D., the Sungan terracotta figurines, N. B. P. and Red-ware were found. It was the period of the Sunga, Kanva and the

ISBN 9788175741560. Retrieved 30 August 2013.

⁴⁰ Reddy (2005). General Studies History 4 UPSC. Tata McGraw-Hill Education. A46. ISBN 9780070604476. Retrieved 30 August 2013.

⁴¹ Dr. Ramkumar Ahirwar book Buddhist culture of Malwa page no. 22 Shivalik prakashan ISBN-819501254-X.

Satavahanas in this region as confirmed by the findings. The most flourishing phase of the activities was the third phase i.e. ascribed to circa 76 A. D. to circa 300 A. D. During this period, the rulers of the region were the Kshatrapas and Satavahanas. It was during this period when we picked-up the sherds bearing the letters of Brahmi scripts. The Red-ware of this phase are highly polished and thus they show the great affinity With the Roman-Samian wares. The Red-Polished spouted vessels of different varieties, punch-marked coins, seals, beads, inscribed seals, iron objects etc. are found in abundance. Obviously, the site had its glorious period as confirmed by these evidences.

The fourth phase has been ascribed to circa 300 A. D. to circa 600 A. D. when the Gupta, Aulikaras and lastly the Hunas had influence over the activities. The red-polished ware, N. B. P. sherds, iron objects, shell objects have been found. Beside these findings, a thick layer of ash about 10 centimeters was traced in two trenches confirming the site to be destroyed by severe fire. Thus, five trenches measuring 5 x 5 meters were laid down on the southern part of the stupa. To begin with Trench SDG. I which was laid on the top of the mound, we noticed that the stupa was built by converting the hillock and the hemispherical shape of the stupa was made by box-heads and a wall was created in the middle of the hillock. The wall was built with the boulders, dressed stones, brick-bats etc. paved in the red murrum with 01 meter foundation and more than 1 meter in height around the stupa like girdle.⁴²

Emperor Ashoka is said to have ruled for a fairly long time, for his regime seems to have lasted from 270 B. C or 269 B.C to 234 B. C or 233 B. C. According to Buddhist tradition, "in the life of Ashoka two important events had great impact on his mind. The first was the coronation and the second was the conversion to Buddhism. He was not so much impressed by the first event, as he was impressed by the second". Throughout his life after conversion to Buddhism, Ashoka the great followed the policy of ahimsa (non-violence). He abolished the slaughter or mutilation of animals in his kingdom. He promoted the concept of vegetarianism and less non vegetarian. He sent missionaries to far off places to propagate the ideals of Buddhism and inspire people to live by the teachings of Lord Buddha. He even engaged his son and daughter to carry out the duties of Buddhist missionaries. Emperor Ashoka built thousands of Stupas and Viharas for Buddhist followers. One of such Stupas, the Great Sanchi Stupa has been declared as a world heritage site by UNESCO. The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath has been adopted as the national emblem of the modern Indian republic. His wheel of righteousness, known as Ashoka Chakra, features on the national flag of India. Ashoka himself was a great philanthropist and his benevolent activities rightly earned him the title. Devanampriya Priyadarshi. Rani Devi repaired Buddha Mahastupa in Ujjaini about 263 BCE and reform this mahastupa which was built on cheever⁴³ and

⁴² Ali, R. Trivedi, A. and Silanki, D. 2004. Buddhist Remains of Ujjain Region- Excavations at Sodanga. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi P 124.

⁴³ Dr. Ramkumar Ahirwar 2021 Buddhist culture of Malwa page no. 12 Shivalik prakashan

Asandi (cushion) of the Buddha that receive after Mahaparnirvana of Buddha to Avanti Janpada.

Unity in diversity is used as an expression of harmony and unity between dissimilar individuals or groups. It is a concept of «unity without uniformity and diversity without fragmentation» that shifts focus from unity based on a mere tolerance of physical, cultural, linguistic, social, religious, political, ideological and/or psychological differences towards a more complex unity based on an understanding that difference enriches human interactions. The idea and related phrase is very old and dates back to ancient times in both Western and Eastern Old World cultures. It has applications in many fields, including ecology, cosmology, philosophy, religion and politics.

The word ecology (German: *Ökologie*) was coined in 1866 by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel. The science of ecology as we know it today began with a group of American botanists in the 1890s. Evolutionary concepts relating to adaptation and natural selection are cornerstones of modern ecological theory. Ecosystems are dynamically interacting systems of organisms, the communities they make up, and the non-living (abiotic) components of their environment. Ecosystem processes, such as primary production, nutrient cycling, and niche construction, regulate the flux of energy and matter through an environment. Ecosystems have biophysical feedback mechanisms that moderate processes acting on living (biotic) and abiotic components of the planet. Ecosystems sustain life-supporting functions and provide ecosystem services like biomass production (food, fuel, fiber, and medicine), the regulation of climate, global biogeochemical cycles, water filtration, soil formation, erosion control, flood protection, and many other natural features of scientific, historical, economic, or intrinsic value.⁴⁴

Philosophy is a systematic study of general and fundamental questions concerning topics like existence, reason, knowledge, value, mind, and language. It is a rational and critical inquiry that reflects on its methods and assumptions.⁴⁵ Religion is a range of social-cultural systems, including designated behaviors and practices, morals, beliefs, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that generally relate humanity to supernatural, transcendental, and spiritual elements^[1] - although there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion⁴⁶ Politics is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of status

ISBN-819501254-X.

⁴⁴ Lalonde, Roxanne (April 1994), "Edited extract from M. A. thesis", *Unity in Diversity: Acceptance and Integration in an Era of Intolerance and Fragmentation*, Ottawa, Ontario: Department of Geography, Carleton University, retrieved 2014-01-09.

⁴⁵ Kalin, Ibrahim (2004b). "Jili, Abd al-Karim al-." In Phyllis G. Jestice (ed.). *Holy People of the World: A Cross-cultural Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO. 430. ISBN 9781576073551.

⁴⁶ Effendi, Shoghi (1938), *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, ISBN 978-0-87743-231-9, retrieved 2014-01-10.

or resources. The branch of social science that studies politics and government is referred to as political science.⁴⁷ Politics may be used positively in the context of a “political solution” which is compromising and non-violent, or descriptively as “the art or science of government”, but the word often also carries a negative connotation.⁴⁸ Unity in diversity is a dream for many nations and organisations. In 2000, the European Union adopted “Unity in Diversity” as their official motto. The adoption of this motto highlighted the unity of diverse nations who were members of the European Union. This concept is integral for the betterment of human society. People have to develop faith in such uniting concepts. Then only can the world bloom in its full colors. People have to respect and love each other irrespective of their differences. With such virtues developed, people can easily eradicate civil challenges like discrimination and oppression from society. Let’s unite together and spread love for a better world. Unity in diversity can be stated as a conceptualization for uniting people with different characteristics. The concept of secularism and unity in diversity has been used in our nation since time immemorial to symbolize the unity of people under one title – India. The thought of unity in diversity helps individuals to accept people. People start respecting the individuality of living beings, value their uniqueness, and respect the opinions of the people. It develops a trust and connection between the people. Such coordination helps in effective decision making and aids in the growth of the nation. By improving mutual respect, solutions for various social issues, riots and other disturbances can be easily attained. It helps to reduce the hatred among the people and increases the overall contentment of the nation. What exactly is diversity? It seems that this word is everywhere; from college campuses to the workplace, people are talking about diversity more and more. As the world becomes more interconnected, it is evident that people from all walks of life need to work together. Diversity is exactly that – it is people of different races, religions, nationalities, and communities coming together for a singular purpose.

Hear from these teens about what exactly diversity means to them. Recognizing and appreciating each other’s differences not only creates an environment that is inclusive to everyone, but it is one of the best ways for groups to think creatively and generate ideas for impactful living. Diversity allows us to recognize our differences as a good thing. Celebrating our different abilities, backgrounds, and beliefs is essential in understanding the world around us. Once you can view others with empathy (the ability to see things from another’s point of view) the opportunities that you will encounter will seem that much more attainable. Diversity is an important component of any group dynamic and there is even evidence that it makes us smarter. Working together in a group that

⁴⁷ Leftwich, Adrian (2015). *What is politics? : the activity and its study*. Polity Press. ISBN 978-0-7456-9852-6. OCLC 911200604.

⁴⁸ Hague, Rod; Harrop, Martin (2013). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. Macmillan International Higher Education. ISBN 978-1-137-31786-5. Archived from the original on 7 July 2019. Retrieved 25 February 2018.

celebrates diversity is an invaluable experience. Being culturally aware enables you to see that people have different backgrounds, personal beliefs and values and recognizing this is not only an important part of cultural appreciation but of identifying the unique attributes of individuals around you that help shape your community. Greenheart Club's strength lies in our diverse group of participants who recognize that the cross-cultural exchange of ideas is such an important part of today's globalized world. Learning about those who are different from you in turn helps you to better understand your own culture and perspective. Diversity really is the one true thing that we all have in common. How do you celebrate diversity in your community? India's cuisines, tourism, handicrafts, and even Bollywood have long colored the world's imagination of what India offers the senses. But it's India's civilizational contributions in the realm of the sacred yoga, Ayurveda, Vedanta, religious pluralism, classical arts, and vegetarianism that have the power to feed the world's soul. And while the supply chain of the former has traveled around the world largely intact, the latter, the exportation of that which is sacred and very often Hindu has often entailed deliberate delinking of the spirit from these ancient systems in order to make them more palatable, daresay more marketable. Yoga in the West has largely been delinked from its Hindu roots for this reason. And now, as the Indian government promotes International Yoga Day, and many Hindu gurus and spiritual teachers continue to spread their teachings, they too are replicating, perhaps unintentionally, a similar delinking. International Yoga Day is explained as a moment to celebrate India's contribution to world civilizations with the introduction of yoga, as a physical, mental, and spiritual practice. Following the adoption and widespread celebrations of Yoga Day, however, controversy quickly ensued when a number of bodies representing religious minorities in India expressed concerns about the celebrations imposing and making mandatory an essentially Hindu practice.

Education and welcome of guest's system of India is well recognized on international front from ancient times. Thus Xuanzang is reference materials for history and evidences. As per records

Xuanzang left Adinapur, which had few Buddhist monks but many stupas and monasteries. He traveled through Hunza and the Khyber Pass, reaching the former capital of Gandhara, Purushapura (Peshawar). By then, Peshawar had lost its former glory, and Buddhism was in decline. Xuanzang visited several stupas, notably the Kanishka Stupa, built southeast of Peshawar by a former king. In 1908, D. B. Spooner rediscovered it using Xuanzang's account.

From Peshawar, Xuanzang traveled northeast to the Swat Valley, reaching Oddiyāna, where he found 1,400 old monasteries that had once housed 18,000 monks. The remaining monks were of the Mahayana school. Continuing northward, he passed through the Buner Valley before looping back via Shahbaz Garhi to cross the Indus River at Hund.

Next, he headed to Taxila, a Mahayana Buddhist kingdom under Kashmir's rule, where he found 5,000 monks in 100 monasteries. In 631, he arrived in Kashmir, where he studied under the monk Samghayasas. Between 632 and early 633, he trained with various monks, including 14 months with

Vinītaprabha, 4 months with Chandravarman, and “a winter and half a spring” with Jayagupta. During this time, he wrote about the Fourth Buddhist Council, held around 100 AD under King Kanishka of Kushana.

Xuanzang also visited Chiniot and Lahore, providing some of the earliest written records of these ancient cities. In 634, he reached Matipura (now Mandawar) and then traveled east to Jalandhar in eastern Punjab. From there, he ascended to the Kulu Valley, where he encountered predominantly non-Mahayana monasteries. Turning southward, he passed through Bairat and reached Mathura on the Yamuna River, which had 2,000 monks from both major Buddhist branches despite being Hindu-dominated.

Continuing his journey, Xuanzang followed the river to Shrughna, mentioned in the works of Udyotakara, then crossed eastward to Matipura, arriving in 635 after crossing the Ganges. At Matipura Monastery, he studied under Mitrasena. From there, he traveled south to Sankasya (Kapitha), believed to be where Buddha descended from heaven, before proceeding to the grand capital of Emperor Harshavardhana, Kanyakubja (Kannauj).

During the Harsha era, he is believed to have visited Govishan (modern-day Kashipur). In 636, he encountered 100 monasteries housing 10,000 monks (both Mahayana and non-Mahayana) and was impressed by the king's patronage of both scholarship and Buddhism. He spent time in the city studying early Buddhist scriptures before continuing eastward to Ayodhya (Saketa), the homeland of the Yogacara school.

Xuanzang then moved south to Kausambi (Kosam), where he had a copy made of an important Buddha image. He traveled north again to Sravasti, then through the Terai region in southern Nepal, where he found abandoned Buddhist monasteries. From there, he reached Kapilavastu, his last stop before Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace.

In 637, Xuanzang set out from Lumbini to Kusinagara, the site of Buddha's death, before heading southwest to the Deer Park at Sarnath, where Buddha gave his first sermon and where Xuanzang found 1,500 resident monks. Continuing eastward via Varanasi, he reached Vaisali, Pataliputra (Patna), and finally Bodh Gaya.

He was then accompanied by local monks to Nalanda, the greatest Indian university of the Indian state of Bihar, where he spent at least the next two years. He was in the company of several thousand scholar-monks, whom he praised. Xuanzang studied logic, grammar, Sanskrit, and the Yogacara school of Buddhism during his time at Nalanda. René Grousset notes that it was at Nalanda (where an “azure pool winds around the monasteries, adorned with the full-blown cups of the blue lotus; the dazzling red flowers of the lovely kanaka hang here and there, and outside groves of mango trees offer the inhabitants their dense and protective shade”) that Xuanzang met the venerable Silabhadra, the monastery's superior.⁴⁹ Silabhadra had dreamt of

⁴⁹ René Grousset. *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*. JA Underwood (trans) Orion Press.

Xuanzang's arrival and that it would help spread far and wide the Holy Law. Grousset writes: "The Chinese pilgrim had finally found the omniscient master, the incomparable metaphysician who was to make known to him the ultimate secrets of the idealist systems. The founders of Mahayana idealism, Asanga and Vasubandhu Dignaga Dharmapala, had in turn trained Silabhadra. Silabhadra was thus in a position to make available to the Sino-Japanese world the entire heritage of Buddhist idealism, and the Siddhi Xuanzang's great philosophical treatise is none other than the Summa of this doctrine, the fruit of seven centuries of Indian Buddhist thought.»

From Nalanda, Xuanzang travelled through several countries, including Pundranagara, to the capital of Pundravardhana, identified with modern Mahasthangarh, in Bangladesh. There Xuanzang found 20 monasteries with over 3,000 monks studying both the Hinayana and the Mahayana. One of them was the Vāsibhā Monastery (Po Shi Po), where he found over 700 Mahayana monks from all over East India.⁵⁰

He also visited Somapura Mahavihara at Paharpur in the district of Naogaon, Bangladesh.

After crossing the Karatoya, he went east to the ancient city of Pragjyotishpura in the kingdom of Kamarupa at the invitation of its Hindu king Kumar Bhaskar Varman, and spent three months in the region. He gives a detailed account about culture and people of Kamrup.

Later, the king escorted Xuanzang back to Kannauj at the request of King Harshavardhana, who was an ally of Kumar Bhaskar Varman, to attend a great Buddhist council there, which was attended by both of the kings.

Xuanzang turned southward and travelled to Andhradesa to visit the Viharas at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. He stayed at Amaravati and studied "Abhidhammapitakam". He observed that there were many Viharas at Amaravati, and some of them were deserted.

He later proceeded to Kanchi, the imperial capital of Pallavas and a strong centre of Buddhism.

Traveling through the Khyber Pass of the Hindu Kush, Xuanzang passed through Kashgar, Khotan, and Dunhuang on his way back to China.

In AD 645, when Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang was passing through the Uttarapatha, Udabhandu or Udabhandapura was the place of residence or secondary capital of the emperor of Kapisa, which then dominated over 10 neighboring states comprising Lampaka, Nagara, Gandhara, and Varna (Bannu) and probably also Jaguda. About Gandhara, the pilgrim says that its capital was Purushapura; the royal family was extinct and country was subject to Kapisa; the towns and villages were desolate and the inhabitants were very few. It seems that under pressure from Arabs in the southwest and the Turks in the north, the kings of Kapisa had left their western possessions in the

New York. 1971. p159-160.

⁵⁰ Watters II (1996), 164-165. Li (1996), 298-299.

hands of their viceroys and made Udabhandha their principal seat of residence. The reason why Udabhandapura was selected in preference to Peshawar is at present unknown, but it is possible that the new city of Udabhandha was built by Kapisa rulers for strategic reasons.⁵¹



639 AD	January-1	Hiranya-parvata (Munger, Bihar): I-lan-na-po-fa-ta	Cunningham, p. 476 - 477
	January-5	Champa (Bhagalpur, Bihar)	Cunningham, p. 477 - 478
	January-10	Kankjol (Rajmahal, Sahibganj, Jharkhand): Kie-chu-u-khi-lo, or Kie-ching-kie-lo.	Cunningham, p. 478 - 479
	January-15	Paundra Varddhana (Mahasthangarh, Bangladesh): Pun-na-fa-tan-na	Cunningham, p. 480 - 481
	February-20	Kamarupa (Assam): Kia-mo-leu-po	Cunningham, p. 500 - 501
	March-20	Samatata (South-eastern part of the Bengal): San-mo-ta-cha	Cunningham, p. 501 - 504
	April-10	Tamralipti (Bengal): Tan-mo-li-ti	Cunningham, p. 504
	April-20	Kirana Suvarna (Singhbhum, Jharkhand)	Cunningham, p. 504 - 510

⁵¹ Sircar, D. C. 1971 The Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, 1971, p 292-93, Dr D. C. Sircar.

	May-5	Orissa: U-cha or Oda	Cunningham, p. 510 - 512
	May-15	Ganjam (Orissa): Kong-yu-to	Cunningham, p. 513 - 515
	May-30	Kalinga (Orissa): Kie-ling-kia	Cunningham, p. 515 - 519
	June-20	Kosala (Vidarbha, or Berar): Kiao-sa-lo	Cunningham, p. 519 - 527
	July-20	Andhra: An-to-lo	Cunningham, p. 527 - 529
	July-30	Dhanakakata (Amaravti, Maharashtra): To. na.kie.tse.kia. Halt 6 months	Cunningham, p. 530 - 545; Julien Vol.i.189
640 AD	February-1	Jorya (Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu: Chu-li-ye, or Jho-li-ye	Cunningham, p. 545 - 548
	February-20	Dravida (Ta-lo-pi-cha). Capital Kanchipura, or Conjeveram (Kien-chi-pu-lo)	Cunningham, p. 548 - 549; Julien Vol.i.190
	April-1	Malyakuta (Malabar): Mo-lo- kiu-cha or Chi-mo-lo	Cunningham, p. 549 - 550
	May-10	Returns to Dravida.	
	June-20	Konkanapura (Maharashtra): Kong-kien-na-pu-lo	Cunningham, p. 552 - 553
	July-20	Maharashtra: Mo-ho-la-cha	Cunningham, p. 553 - 556
	August-10	Bharoch (Gujarat): Po-lu-kie-che-po	Cunningham, p. 326 - 327
	September-1	Malwa (Madhya Pradesh): Mo-la-po	Cunningham, p. 490 - 492
	October-10	Vadari or Eder (Surat): O-cha-li	Cunningham, p. 494 - 495
	October-15	Kheda Gujarat, or Khaira: Kie-cha	Cunningham, p. 492 - 493
	November-1	Vallabhi (Vallabhipur, ,Gujarat)	Cunningham, p. 316 - 324

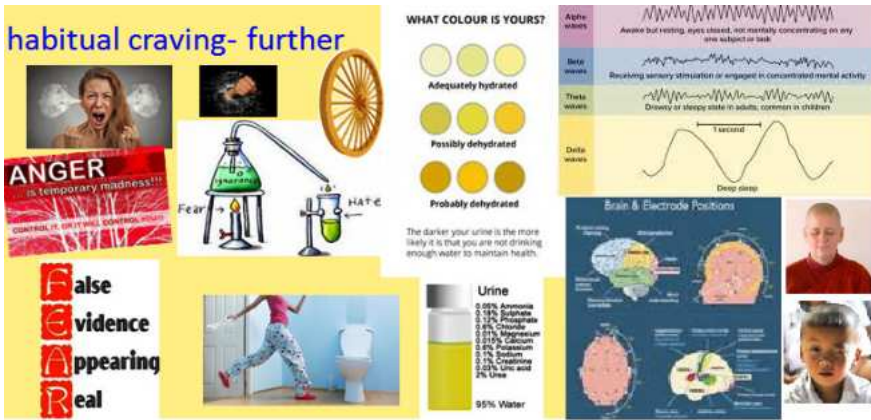
	November-16	Anandapura (Vadnagar ,Gujarat): O.nan.to.pulo	Cunningham, p. 493 - 494
	November-26	Surashtra (Gujarat): Su-la-cha	Cunningham, p. 324 - 326
641 AD	January-1	Gurjjara (Western Rajasthan):Kiu-che-lo, capital - Barmer :Pi-lo-mi-lo	Cunningham, p. 312 - 316
	February-20	Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh): U-she-yen-na	Cunningham, p. 489 - 490
	March-20	Jajhoti (Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh):Chi-chi-to	Cunningham, p. 481 - 485
	April-5	Maheswarapura (Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh): Mo-hi-shi-fa-lo-pu-lo	Cunningham, p. 488 - 489
	May-15	Returns to Surashtra.	
	June-20	Udumbara or Kachh (Gujarat: O-tien-po-chi-lo)	Cunningham, p. 302 - 304
	July-30	Langala or Biluchistan (Pakistan): Lang-kie-lo	Cunningham, p. 310 - 311
	August-13	Pitasila or Patala (Lower Sindh,Pakistan): Pi-to-shi-lo	Cunningham, p. 277 - 287
	August-20	Avanda or Brahmanabad (Pakistan):O-fan-cha	Cunningham, p. 267 - 277
	September-1	Sindh. Capital Alor:Pi-chen-po-pu-lo. Halt 20 days.	Cunningham, p. 249 - 262
	October-10	Multan (Pakistan):Meu-lo-san-pu-lo	Cunningham, p. 219 - 224, 230 - 241
	October-20	Polofato/ (Solofato) (Shorkot, Jhang, Pakistan: Po-la-fa-to. Halt for 2 months.	Cunningham, p. 203 - 207
642 AD	April-1	Returns to Magadha. Halts 2 months to resolve doubts.	Vol.i.211

	August-5	Revisits Kamarupa. Halts one month; messengers sent to different kingdoms	Vol.i.236
	November-1	Starts for Kanyakubja, or Kanoj, “in beginning of winter,” in company with King Siladitya.	Vol.i.242
	December-25	Arrives in the last month of the year. Religious assembly at Kanoj; discussions for 18 days	Vol.i.242. Vol.i.246

In late August 2000, Goenkaji¹ participated in the Millennium World Peace Summit gathering of 1000 of the world’s religious and spiritual leaders, held at the United Nations under the auspices of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The purpose of the meeting was to promote tolerance, foster peace, and encourage inter-religious dialogue. With the many different viewpoints represented, the potential for disagreement was strong. In his presentation to the delegates, Goenkaji⁵³ tried to highlight what they, and all spiritual paths have in common: the universal Dhamma. His remarks were received with repeated ovations. The outer form always differs; there will be so many variations in rites, rituals, ceremonies or beliefs. Let us not quarrel about all that, but instead give importance to the inner essence. Ashoka says, “By so doing, one helps one’s own religion to grow and also renders service to the religions of others. In acting otherwise, one digs the grave of one’s own religion, and harms other religions as well.” This is a serious warning for us all. The message says, “Someone who honors his own religion and condemns other religions may do so out of devotion to his religion thinking ‘I will glorify my religion,’ but his actions injure his own religion more gravely.” Finally, Ashoka presents the message of the Universal Law, the message of Dharma: “Let all listen: Concord is good, not quarrelling. Let all be willing to listen to the doctrine professed by others.” Instead of disagreeing and condemning, let us give importance to the essence of the teaching of every religion. Then, there will be real peace, real harmony.⁵² For example, music, arts, dance, etc., is part of the core curriculum in a few countries. They differ in their school education system structures, curricular framework, and learning assessment, though not much on the teaching and learning processes. The countries differ in policies and provisions of health and physical education, though it is a part of the academic framework in all countries. Countries also differ on policies and provisions for hobby and life skills education, skills education, and moral, social, and cultural education. All the countries make periodic education policy reforms, though they differ in

⁵² Goenka, S. N. 2000. Millennium World Peace Summit on 29 August 2000 at the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations. <https://www.vridhamma.org/node/2526>.

their periodicity to cope with the change, especially since 2010. A brief analysis of lessons learned may be worthwhile.⁵³



Thus Meditation is a great way to slow down in a busy world. Even a few minutes a day of meditation and mindfulness can help you better yourself and improve your mental health. A study published in the Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine found that meditation can improve anxiety, depression, and pain scores, especially during times of crisis. It can also help lower stress. Practicing meditation can even help you become more aware of your thought patterns, enabling you to learn more about yourself over time. It can increase your self-awareness and help you spot bad habits that negatively impact your mood and life. This self-awareness enables you to create and embrace positive change.

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⁵³ Mukhopadhyay, Marmar and Arnav Kundu, 2023. Education for Global Peace and Harmony.

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Mr. Ajahn Brahmāli was born in Norway in 1964. He first became interested in Buddhism and meditation in his early 20s, whilst on a visit to Japan. After completing masters' degrees in engineering and finance, he travelled to Australia to train at Bodhinyana Monastery where he took full ordination in 1996, with Ajahn Brahm as his preceptor. 2025 is Ajahn Brahmāli's 30th year as a Buddhist monk. He is renowned for his excellent knowledge of the Pali language and his enthusiasm for teaching the Suttas. He is also well known as a scholar of the Vinaya - the monastic rules and procedures - of which he has completed the first full translation into English. Ajahn Brahmāli's clear and insightful talks help make the Buddha's teachings accessible to all. He is regularly invited to conduct retreats in Australia, South-East Asia, Sri Lanka, and Europe. He has also published numerous essays on important points of Dhamma, including the legitimacy of bhikkhuni ordination, of which he is a supporter. In 2023 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree for his contribution to Buddhist studies.

Dr. Kavita Chauhan is a dedicated scholar and educator specializing in Buddhist Studies and History. She holds a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Delhi (2011), where her research focused on A Historical Analysis of the Position of Women in Ancient Indian Buddhism, based on Pāli Piṭaka Literature and early Buddhist texts. She also earned an M.Phil. and M.A. in Buddhist Studies from Delhi University and a B.A. (Hons.) in History from Magadh University. Dr. Chauhan has been actively engaged in teaching and research, currently serving as a Post Graduate Teacher (PGT) in History at Greater Valley School, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, since 2017. Previously, she was a Lecturer in History at Savitri Bai Phule Balika Inter College (2013-2017) and a Project Fellow at the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi (2009-2012), under the Special Assistance Program of UGC. She has made significant contributions to Buddhist studies, authoring the book *The Position of Women in Ancient Indian Buddhism: A Historical Analysis* (2018) and publishing research papers in esteemed journals like *Maha Bodhi*, *Lumbini Prabha*, and *Buddhist Studies*. Dr. Chauhan has also presented at international conferences in India and Vietnam.

Dr. Sushant D. Chimne is having more than 18 years of teaching and research experience. He is serving as a Professor in Adv. Ramkrishnaji Rathi Law College, Washim since 2007 to till date. He was awarded the Ph.D. degree in "Administration of Prisons and Prison Reforms in Maharashtra: A Critical Analysis with special reference to decided cases" by Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati in 2019. He has published more than 25 research paper in several reputed Journals at National and International Level. He has also participated and presented research papers at State, National and International Conferences and Seminars. He has also published 02 Chapters in Edited Books. Presently, 04 students are pursuing Ph. D. Research under his supervision. Dr. Sushant D. Chimne has served as a Officiating Principal of Adv. Ramkrishnaji Rathi Law College, Washim from the year 2007 to 2009 and 2019 to 2023. He has also served as a member on various committees of the Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati (Maharashtra) India.

Mrs. Shyamol Chowdhury is the Editor & Publisher of AMITABHA. Born in 1977 at Chittagong, District of Bangladesh. In 1997, he earned a diploma in Electrical Engineering from Chittagong Polytechnic Institute, graduating in second class. He obtained his Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in 2000, also in second class, and later completed an MBA in Marketing from the University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITs), Chittagong. In 2001, he founded his own organization and initiated the publication of 'Amitabha' a social-literary-cultural journal that he has edited for over 24 years. The magazine is registered with the government and is readily accessible to progressive readers. He is an enlisted Lyricist at Bangladesh Television (BTV). Also he involved in cultural activities since his student days, participating in several stage plays. Various programs scripts and dramas scripts written by him have already been aired on Bangladesh Radio, Bangladesh Television & other TV Channel in Bangladesh. He has been awarded honors in recognition of practicing literature from various organizations. He participated as paper presenter at International Conference at Greater Noida, India (2017), 5th International Conference of IATBU, Colombo, Sri Lanka (2018) and United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) Academic Conference at Vietnam (2019).

Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Lien Đang is a Ph.D. candidate at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University in Yangon, Myanmar. Her research focuses on Vipassanā, with a particular interest in the three universal characteristics (Sāmaññalakkhaṇa) from a Vipassanā perspective.

Ven. Dr. Shi Daoxin, born in December 1987 in Jing-Zhou City, Hubei Province, China, became a nun in February 2002 at Jinshan Monastery, Fuzhou City, Jiangxi Province, under the guidance of her master, Ven. Yan Yao. She pursued an associate degree in Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings at the monastery and later studied Preparatory Courses at Zhong De Temple in Fu'an in 2007. In 2009, she began her undergraduate studies at the Buddhist College of Minnan in Xiamen, graduating in 2013. Recognized for her academic excellence and personal qualities, she was recommended by the Buddhist College of Minnan to study overseas, supported by Ven. Guang Sheng, Abbot of the Buddhist College of Singapore. In 2014, she chose to pursue a Master of Arts at the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka, graduating in 2017, and subsequently registered for a Ph.D. at the same institution in 2018. She successfully passed her Viva Voce Examination in September 2022 and received her Ph.D. Certificate in May 2023. Since July 2024, Rev. Shi Daoxin has been serving at the Buddhist College of Minnan in Xiamen, continuing her dedication to Buddhist education and scholarship.

Venerable Pannabodhi is a Buddhist monk from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a middle country of the African continent. Born in April 8, 1986 from a Buddhist family. His father who ordained as a monk in Thailand passed away eight years ago, he is the one who started the Buddha Dhamma in Congo from his early lay life. However, like his father, Ven. Pannabodhi got his higher ordination in November 2017 in Sri Lanka Amarapura lineage. He is a devoted monk who tirelessly works to disseminate the dhamma in a country

where even the name of the Buddha is still unknown through Dhamma talks, meditation programs, and retreats. Today he is the guide of three meditation centers in different parts of the country, with some lay followers who freely converted to Buddhism by taking refuge in the Triple Gem. Bhante hopes that in near future he will be able to produce many monks for further propagation of dhamma in his country.

Venerable Professor Dr Mahinda Deegalle is a Professorial Research Associate at SOAS, University of London and Professor Emeritus in Religions, Philosophies and Ethics, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom. Recently, he was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge. He is an ordained Theravāda Buddhist monk, trained in the History of Religions and Buddhist Studies. He graduated from the University of Peradeniya (B.A. Hons), Harvard University (MTS) and The University of Chicago (Ph.D.). He has held Numata Visiting Professorship in Buddhist Studies at McGill University, Canada and NEH Professorship in Humanities at Colgate University, USA. He has conducted post-doctoral research at Kyoto University and other institutions under Japan Society for Promotion of Science and Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai. He has been awarded grants by the British Academy / Leverhulme Trust, British Council and Fulbright. He is the author of *Popularizing Buddhism: Preaching as Performance in Sri Lanka* (State University of New York Press, 2006) and several edited volumes including, including *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka* (Routledge, 2006), *Vesak, Peace and Harmony* (2015), *Philosophy, Ethics and Buddhist Practice* (2023) and *Buddhism and Humanitarian Law* (Routledge 2024). He appears regularly in BBC and other international media.

Venerable Dr. Thich Trung Dinh, from Phuong Lang village, Hai Ba commune, Hai Lang district, Quang Tri province. Ordained and studied at Quy Thien Patriarchal Temple, Hue. In 2004, graduated from Bao Quoc Buddhist Intermediate School, with honors. In 2009, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Buddhist studies in Hue. In 2010, he went abroad to study in India, and in 2012 graduated with a Master's degree in Buddhist studies, Delhi University, India. In 2013, he moved to Gautam Buddha University, Uttra Pradesch to continue studying for an Associate Doctorate here. At the end of 2014, he graduated with an Associate Doctorate in Buddhist Studies. In 2018, graduated with a doctorate in Buddhist studies, Gautam Buddha University, India. In 2018, he returned home and began giving lectures at ashrams in the country as well as abroad. In the same year, he became a teacher of an applied Buddhist practice class at Lieu Quan Buddhist Cultural Center, Hue. Currently, he is Standing member of the Central Cultural Committee, Deputy Committee and Chief Secretary of the Buddhist Cultural Heritage Committee; Deputy Chief Secretary of the Central Overseas Dhamma Propagation Committee, Deputy Chief of Dhamma Propagation Committee of the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha of Thua Thien Hue province, Deputy Committee and Chief Secretary of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Cultural Committee of Thua Thien Hue province.

Dr. Charitha Dissanayake is currently serving as a communication lecturer at the University of Melbourne. He holds a Ph.D., earned through groundbreaking research focused on devising an innovative radio program model tailored for Australia's ethnic listeners. He is the author of the insightful book 'Your Radio: My Voice,' which delves into the interests of ethnic audiences in Australia. Charitha has made significant contributions as a broadcaster in Australia, earning him national-level recognition, including the prestigious Best Ethnic Radio Program Award. He served as the President of 3MDR Radio station, Australia, showcasing his leadership acumen and commitment to community broadcasting. Additionally, he actively contributes to two Australian Government projects, 'Speak My Language' and 'Multicultural News Service,' as a dedicated podcaster, furthering the cause of multiculturalism and fostering inclusive communication. Charitha's passion for media, education, and community-driven initiatives defines his profound impact in the field of communication.

Dr. Dongre Sushma is an assistant professor in Government Ayurvedic College, Nagpur Maharashtra state, India. she completed her post graduation and Ph.D. in the subject of Rasashashtra and Bhaishjya Kalpana (Pharmaceutical science). She has teaching experience of twenty-one years for UG teaching and post graduate experience of eight years. She is a post graduate and Ph.D. guide. Currently she has seven post graduate students to her credit. She has presented more than twenty-five papers in various national and international conferences. She also published more than thirty-five research papers in National as well as international journals. She has two book Chapters to her credit. She has attended various research related conferences and workshops. She attended VESAK Buddhist Conference 2019, Vietnam. She worked as Jury member for the research competition in 2024. Also delivered lectures on pharmacovigilance for healthcare professionals.

Anand Kishta Durge Post Graduate in Social Sciences from Maharashtra state of India, Chief Executive of Kapilvastu Buddha Vihar Trust, Malkanjgiri, Telangana, India, Member, South Indian Buddhist Federation, India, Organizing Member, Buddha Fraternity Council Tamil Nadu India Dhamma Yatra from Kerala to Deeksha Bhumi, Nagpur, India.

Anwar Matus Estrada born on March 12, 1996, in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, to Mexican parents. Currently studying Earth Sciences at the Universidad Autónoma de México. Practicing Buddhism since 2002. Member of the Dhamma Vihara monastery, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico. Also he is an associate member of Buddhismo Theravada Hispano AR.

Dr. Paul Fuller is Lecturer in in Buddhist Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He holds an MA and PhD in Buddhist Studies from the University of Bristol. He has lectured in Buddhist Studies, Asian Studies and Religious Studies at universities in Asia, Australia and the UK. His main research interests are in early Buddhist philosophy, and modern Buddhism, particularly engaged Buddhism.

His recent publications attempt to understand how modern Buddhist movements are anticipated in the earlier textual tradition. He explores possible

interpretations of Buddhist identity based on ethnicity and nationalism. His latest book, *An Introduction to Engaged Buddhism*, was published by Bloomsbury in 2021. It looks at contemporary issues in Buddhism including, politics, sexuality, gender, eco-engaged Buddhism and ethnocentric Buddhism.

Ms. Sanghmitra Gautam is pursuing Masters in Buddhist Studies from University of Delhi and also she is pursuing Pali certificate course from University of Delhi and apart from this she is doing Tibetan language course from Tibet House Cultural Centre of his holiness Dalai Lama. she has completed Bachelors in commerce (hons.) from University of Delhi itself. After that she has completed Masters in commerce and also cleared a national level exam UGC NET a qualifying exam to become an assistant professor in university. she has completed Bachelors in Education and cleared secondary and higher secondary level exams. She is a Buddhist Person, her family follows Buddhist Principles and Teachings. She has attended many meditation retreats in India. She truly believes in Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha. She follows the Pancasila, Brahmaviharas and Noble Eight Fold Path. she is a honest humble and a generous person. Her aim is to spread Buddhism to every place of the world.

Ven. Penaboda Gnanaloka is a Senior Lecturer in Buddhist Philosophy at the Sri Lankan International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Kandy. He holds an M.Phil. in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, where his research focused on Citta Visuddhi (purity of mind) in the modern world. Additionally, he earned a Master of Arts in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Kelaniya and a Bachelor of Arts in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. With over ten years of teaching experience, Ven. Gnanaloka has taught Buddhist philosophy to monks and lay students, including a tenure at Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Center, England. He has actively participated in seventeen international and twelve local conferences and has authored five books on Buddhist philosophy. His research covers Buddhist ethics, social work, education, and mental well-being, and he has presented on topics such as Buddhist cosmology, moral education, and mindfulness-based therapy.

Bhikkhuni Thich Nguyen Giac Hanh (Nguyen Thi Anh Vy) obtained an M.A. degree from the Department of Buddhist Studies, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India, and is currently a Ph.D. Research Scholar at the same institution. Previously, she graduated from the Department of Buddhism History, Course X, Vietnam Buddhist University, Ho Chi Minh City, with a B.A. degree in 2017. She wrote many articles for Buddhist magazines in Vietnam, and most recently some articles on Buddhism and American Culture and the Influences of Buddhism on the Spiritual Life of Americans published in *Indian Streams Research Journal*. She also gave presentations at international and national conferences on Buddhism, Science, and Technology held in India. The fundamental teachings of Buddhism and the discoveries of contemporary science have created an intersection and closed relationship between them, emphasizing the importance of Buddhist ethics as well as how to truly understand and practice the Buddha's teachings in the

digital age toward a sustainable developed society with inner peace, stillness, and awareness.

Ven. Dr. Thích Trung Hạnh has graduated from the Basic and Intermediate Buddhist Studies programs at the Đại Tông Lâm Buddhist College in Ba Rịa Vung Tau Province. He also holds a Bachelor's degree from the Viet Nam National University - Ho Chi Minh City. He earned a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya City, Thailand. Additionally, he completed a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies from the Srilanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) in Kandy City, Sri Lanka. He obtained a Doctorate from the University of Peradeniya in Kandy City, Sri Lanka. He was a lecture of Buddhist Studies Department of the Srilanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) in Kandy City, Sri Lanka. Currently, he serves as the Chief Secretary of the Buddhist Propagation Committee of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in Ben Tre Province and is the Abbot of Long Khanh Pagoda in Long Tan Commune, Long Dat District, Ba Rịa Vung Tau Province. In addition to his research, he has published numerous articles in both Vietnamese and English on Buddhist studies and psychology.

Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Diệu Hiếu completed B.A. in Buddhist Studies from Vietnam Buddhist Academy in 2001. She joined International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar from 2003-2016 and completed B.A., M.A., and PhD. Her main research area is tranquility and insight meditation according to early Buddhist texts. She completed her Doctoral degrees in 2015. Her doctoral dissertation focused on Insight Meditation, titled "Evaluation of Interrelationship between Samatha and Vipassanā in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation." Currently, she is Vice Dean of Pāli Department and a lecturer at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City teaching Vipassana Meditation, Pāli Language, Dhammapada, and Pāli Literature. She is a standing member of International Buddhist Committee in Vietnam. She is a standing member of the Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute, Deputy Director and Secretary of the Research and Application of Theravāda Buddhist Meditation Center, and the abbess of Long Hung Monastery in Binh Tan District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

She delivers lectures on both Basic and Advanced Vipassanā meditation at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City. Additionally, she conducts short and long Vipassanā meditation retreats for both children and adults. She also organizes and leads vipassanā meditation programs specifically designed for nuns at her temple. Furthermore, she actively engages in giving Dhamma talks and teaching at weekend meditation retreats hosted in various temples across Vietnam.

Mr. Jatayu Jiwanda DL was born in Denpasar, 1991. He studied at Universitas Indonesia, majoring in Philosophy and earned both his bachelor and master's degree there. Now, he has been a lecturer at Sriwijaya State Buddhist College Tangerang Banten since 2018. He is passionate with the research and teaching on philosophy particularly ethics and eastern philosophy, and is

always eager to explore new ideas or expand knowledge in these fields. He has conducted numerous research studies on these topics, such as humanity and Levinas's Philosophy, the emergence of early Buddhism philosophy, online learning ethics, fostering gender sensitivity in the campus environment and digital ethics.

U.G.T.D. Jayaweera (born 1999) is a final-year student concurrently pursuing two Bachelor of Arts (BA) Special degrees in Buddhist Leadership at the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy and Maha Chulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand. She is also pursuing a diploma in Human Rights at the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy. Additionally, she is a social worker and holds a diploma in language teaching training. Her diverse experiences reflect a strong commitment to both spiritual leadership and community service

Dr. Sunil Kariyakarawana was born in a rural village, Lelwala in the Galle district of Sri Lanka. After the primary and secondary education in the south of the island he entered the University of Kelaniya near the capital city of Colombo and obtained his B.A. honour's degree (with a first class) in Linguistics, Literature and Philosophy in 1983. In 1985, he won the Commonwealth Postgraduate scholarship offered by the Commonwealth Association of Canada and completed his Masters in Theoretical Linguistics at the University of Ottawa. In 1987, he was offered a teaching assistantship by the Cornell University, New York and obtained his PhD in Theoretical Linguistics and Cognitive Studies in 1992. In the same year, he was offered a senior lecturer position by the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka and worked there until April 2000. In April 2000, he won two international postdoctoral fellowships: one to take up research in child language acquisition at the Rikkyo University Tokyo, Japan and the other by the Association of Commonwealth Universities UK to take up research in Clinical Linguistics at the University College London. Having completed both research projects, in 2002, he joined the department of Language and Communication Science, City University of London teaching clinical linguistics to BSc. Students. In the same year, he migrated to UK under the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme.

Mr. Majaputera Karniawan, M.Ph.D. Currently, he is lecture of Suttapitaka and Qualitative Research Methodology in Nalanda Buddhist Institute, East Jakarta, Indonesia. Candidate of Ph.D in Faculty of Religion and Culture in Hindu Indonesia University (UNHI), Bali, Indonesia. He is also chief editor of setangkaidupa.com, an education community of east religion and cultural wisdom, and non-sectarian Dhammaduta in Dasa Paramita foundation, Council of Tridharma Believers Indonesia (MAPTRI), and writer of some Buddhist book in Yasodhara Puteri foundation, Indonesia.

Dr. Hari Babu Katariya was born 1964 in a Julaha (kabirpanthi) family, village katera of Jhansi district. He spent his entire childhood in Gwalior city and did his graduation and post graduation in anesthesia from Gajra Raja Medical College Gwalior, India and provided health services in the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi and R. D. Gardi Medical College Ujjain,

M.P. India and in the para military Force of India. Author of Books, research paper and sovenirs. Organise seminar and conferences on Buddhism, Medical/ Health services and free Medical Camps for poor people time to time in last one decade. He accepted the evils and inequality prevalent in Indian society as a challenge since childhood. Along with health services he inspired by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He strengthened the oppressed people ideologically and fought political battle for their rights. At present he is the Founder president of Ujjain Buddhist Society of Ujjain (Congratulatory Message submitted for UN Vesak 2025). His main aim to reinstate the legacy of Ashok Dhamma in Ujjain (Samrat Ashok region-as his son Ven Mahendra & Daughter Sanghmitra both belong to this region) with its ideology like freedom, equality, friendship, Brotherhood and Justice.

Dr. Ashwani Kumar is working as Assistant Professor in Centre for Comparative Religions and Civilizations, Central University of Jammu, Jammu. Before this he also worked as contractual lecturer as a contractual in Buddhist Studies University of Jammu

He did his 10th Jammu and Kashmir Board of school education, 10+ 2 from Jammu and Kashmir Board of school education B.A., from University of Jammu, Jammu, 2009, M.A in Buddhist Studies from University of Jammu, Jammu, 2011 and also UGC-NET/JRF qualified (December 2010) and Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies, University of Jammu, Jammu on the topic “Psycho- Ethical Analysis of Suttavibhanga” 2018. Dr. Ashwani has published many national and international research papers in various journals. Besides this he has also presented approximately 20 papers in national and international conferences. Dr. Ashwani Kumar interest areas are Pali and Buddhist Literature, Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhist Code of Conduct.

Venerable Dr. Thich Nu Nguyet Lien (Ho Thi Ngu Long), a Buddhist scholar and monastic, has significantly contributed to the fields of Buddhist philosophy, humanities, and interfaith dialogue. With a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), Thailand, she has dedicated her academic journey to deepening the understanding of Buddhist thought and its applications in contemporary society. Her research encompasses Buddhist ethics, gender studies in Buddhism, and the role of mindfulness in modern education. Over the years, she has authored multiple scholarly papers and publications, with key works focusing on the integration of Buddhist principles in sustainable development and moral education. As an ordained monastic since 1996, she has played a vital role in promoting Buddhist teachings within Vietnam and internationally. Her contributions extend beyond academia to active engagements in Buddhist communities, advocating for ethical leadership, female monastic empowerment, and social harmony. Through her teachings, research, and international collaborations, she has established herself as a leading voice in Buddhist scholarship, fostering a bridge between traditional Buddhist wisdom and contemporary global challenges.

Ven. P. Narada is a scholar in Buddhist philosophy and Pāli studies, currently serving as a Lecturer at the Buddhist and Pali University, Sri Lanka.

He holds two Master's degrees in Buddhist Studies from the Buddhist and Pali University and the University of Kelaniya, along with a First-Class B.A. (Hons) in Buddhist Studies from the University of Colombo. His research focuses on Buddhist epistemology, logic, Theravāda studies, and philosophical schools, and he has published extensively in international conferences and peer-reviewed journals. He has also contributed as Chairman of the Research Symposium Committee and Co-chair of the International Buddhist Conference on Theravāda Buddhism. In addition to his teaching experience at the University of Kelaniya, he has authored books, translations, and edited volumes on Buddhist thought. A recipient of multiple academic awards and distinctions, Ven. P. Narada actively engages in Buddhist education, research, and conference leadership both in Sri Lanka and internationally.

Ms. Pooja Nehra is a dedicated artist, researcher, and educator currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Fine Arts and Buddhist Studies with a specialization in Buddhist Painting: From Traditional to Contemporary Arts. With a passion for creativity and a commitment to academic excellence, she aims to explore the evolution of Buddhist painting and its significance in modern artistic expressions. With extensive experience in teaching and training, Ms. Nehra has worked as a faculty in many Universities. Additionally, she has been working as a freelance artist for the past 10 years, mentoring young artists and promoting creative expression. She is deeply devoted to encouraging new talent, fostering artistic appreciation, and promoting painting as a powerful medium of self-expression. Her areas of interest include fine arts, creativity, teaching, and training, with a strong focus on art education for children and young learners. She has actively participated in and organized painting exhibitions and artistic initiatives, such as the Mission of Unity (2019), and contributed to national projects like PAHAL – EK PRAYAS under the Swachh Bharat Mission. She holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts (Painting) and a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies and also completed various courses in visual arts, painting, computer applications, fashion design, and language proficiency.

Dr. Pham Van Nga, pen name Nguyen Can, born in 1956, is a lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics and Van Lang University. The author has published 23 books on poetry, essays, editorials, short stories, ... and translated 14 books on economics and society, and is a contributor to the Buddhist Culture, Giac Ngo, Vo Uu, Tu Quang, Huong Thien, Duoc Sen, Thien Nhon newspapers and a number of overseas Buddhist newspapers.

Mr. O.A. Samantha Lal Opanayake is a distinguished scholar in Eastern philosophy, specializing in Buddhist studies. With a deep commitment to the study and interpretation of Buddhist texts and traditions, he has dedicated his career to exploring the philosophical foundations of early Buddhist doctrines, the evolution of later sects, and their relevance to contemporary ethical and metaphysical questions. Currently, he serves as a lecturer at the Nāgānanda International Institute for Buddhist Studies (NIIBS), Manelwatta, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, and as a visiting lecturer at the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. He is also pursuing an MPhil in Buddhist Studies at the Postgraduate

Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, with a research focus on Buddhist Psychology.

Ven. Thích Nhuận Phước (aka. Lê Minh Hoàng) born 1995. He spent nearly five years studying and practicing in Myanmar, the Land of Golden Pagodas. He graduated a Bachelor's degree in Buddhist Studies at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University in Yangon, Myanmar. Later, he studied and successfully completed a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, specializing in Theravāda Abhidhamma Philosophy and Psychology. Currently, He is a Ph.D. candidate in Buddhist Philosophy and Psychology at the Vietnam Buddhist Academy in Sóc Sơn, Hanoi.

Ven. Prof. W. Piyaratana has passed the final examination of Oriental Language at the Ministry of Education, and he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Pali with First Class Honor from the University of Peradeniya 2003, and Master of Arts Degree in Sanskrit from the Buddhist and Pali University in Colombo, Master of Arts Degree in Buddhist Study and Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand. He has served as a lecturer at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and International Buddhist College in Hat Yai, Thailand. Currently, he is lecturing at the Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. He also serves as the Director of BA English Program in Buddhist Studies at the same university. So far, he has published more than 45 articles in Sinhalese, Pali, and English mediums, and published several books in Sinhalese and English Mediums. Some of his books are; Theravada Buddhism, Visuddhimagga Studies, Sigalovada sutta: How to Strike a Perfect Balance in Society, the Manual of Suttanipata, The Noble Eightfold Path and Astanga Yoga: A Comparative Study, An Annotated Translation of Suttanipata, Syncretism and Socialization of Buddhism.

Dr. P. R. Wasantha Priyadarshana, Senior Professor at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, is a distinguished scholar in Buddhist Psychology, Counseling, and Psychotherapy. With an academic career spanning over two decades, he has significantly contributed to the intersection of Buddhist philosophy and mental health, particularly in the application of Buddhist psychotherapy for stress management, grief counseling, and conflict resolution. His extensive body of research includes numerous peer-reviewed publications on Buddhist psychological approaches to mental well-being, cognitive behavior therapy, and the role of mindfulness in psychotherapy. As a visiting professor at institutions across Asia, including Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, and Hong Kong, Prof. Priyadarshana has played a pivotal role in disseminating Buddhist psychological principles globally. His scholarly impact extends beyond academia, contributing to policy discussions on Buddhist counseling, conducting training programs for law enforcement and educators, and developing frameworks for Buddhist-based mental health interventions. Through his pioneering research and academic engagements, he has cemented

his position as a leading authority in Buddhist Psychology, bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary therapeutic practices.

Dr. Ramesh Rohit got his UG and PG degree from RTM Nagpur University. He completed his doctoral research work from Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar, a Central University. Dr. Rohit got scholarship from Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi for outstanding performance in Pali language in 2009. He was also awarded with UGC Junior Research Fellowship in Pali Language in 2012. He has attended more than fifty International, National Seminars and Conferences as well as Workshops. He has also delivered more than twenty lectures on various topics in International and National Conferences and Seminars. Dr. Rohit has published more than twelve research papers in reputed Journals. His area of interests are Pali Language, Buddhism and Ambedkar Thought.

Ven. Bhante Shakyaputra Sagar Thero, born on July 4, 1980, in Maharashtra, India, is a revered Buddhist monk, social reformer, and community leader dedicated to fostering peace and uplifting marginalized communities. Trained under the esteemed guidance of Ven. Bhante Aryanagarjun Surai Sasai Mahathera, he channels his spiritual and creative energy to serve the wider Buddhist community and society at large. As the founder of the Buddhabhoomi Dhammadoot Sangh and Chief Abbot of the Buddhabhoomi Mahavihar Monastery in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, he has transformed the monastery into a hub for religious, social, and cultural activities. His initiatives include leadership training, Vipassana meditation, women's empowerment, and educational support for underprivileged groups, including SC/ST and minority communities. Bhante Shakyaputra's contributions extend to the creation of the tallest statue of Lord Buddha in Madhya Pradesh, symbolizing Buddhist pride and unity. Recognized for his efforts, he has been honored with numerous awards such as the Peace and Harmony Award (2005) and the Corona Warrior Honour (2020). Through his national and international engagements, including conferences in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, Bhante Shakyaputra Sagar Thero continues to inspire global audiences with his dedication to spreading Buddhist values and promoting interfaith harmony.

Prof. Dr. Saw Htut Sandar is a distinguished scholar, professor, and advisor in Buddhist Studies, currently serving at the Department of Buddhist Studies, Ras Bihari Bose Subharti University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. Born on October 18, 1960, in Myanmar, she holds a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Magadh University, Bodhgaya, India (2013), alongside a B.Sc. in Mathematics from Yangon Arts & Science University (1982). With extensive teaching experience across various institutions, she has served as a Visiting Professor at Lumbini Buddhist University, Nepal, Swami Vivekananda Subharti University, Meerut, and Magadh University. As a prolific author and researcher, she has published books and journal articles covering Buddhism, peace, and environmental ethics. Beyond academia, Dr. Sandar is deeply engaged in humanitarian and social welfare initiatives, founding the Asoka Welfare Foundation in 2014, which established free clinics, educational

programs, and disaster relief efforts in Myanmar, Nepal, and India. A renowned international speaker, she has presented over 30 research papers at conferences in India, Nepal, Thailand, China, and other countries, addressing topics such as Buddhist ethics, mindfulness, and Buddhism in contemporary society.

Mr. Ricardo Sasaki is founder-director and teacher at Nalanda Center for Buddhist Studies in Brazil. He has trained for the last 42 years under many teachers of various Buddhist traditions. Besides his work in Psychological Counselling and directing the Buddhist Center, he is also a writer and a translator, being responsible for the translations of Ajahn Buddhadasa, with whom he studied, into Portuguese language. He has been teaching Buddhist philosophy and meditation in Brazil and Europe, as well as participating and speaking in several international congresses in the past thirty years. He received Dharma teacher accreditation from Aggamahapandita Rewata Dhamma Sayadaw as “Dhammacariya Dhanapāla”, and later the title of “Mahāsādharmmajotikadhāja” from the Buddhist Sangha and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Myanmar, and subsequently he was honoured with an honorary MA in Buddhism by the Birmingham Buddhist Academy, recognized by the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University of Myanmar.

Prof. Vijay Kumar Singh, Professor and ex-Chairperson, Department of Chinese and Tibetan Languages, Panjab University, India.

Dr. Sharanpal Singh is an Assistant Professor at Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut. Residing in Krishna Nagar, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. He completed his MA in Buddhist Studies from University of Delhi in 2017 and Ph. D from Gautam Buddha University, Noida Uttar Pradesh in 2024. He is a dedicated Buddhist practitioner who engages in Anapanasati and Metta Bhavana meditation daily. He lives with his family, including his wife and two daughters, leading a life rooted in academia and spiritual practice. His commitment to Buddhist teachings and meditation reflects in both his personal and professional life.

Mr Jai Singh B. Sc. Ag. M Sc. Ag Agra University, Ex Assistant Chief Technical Officer, Indian Council of Agriculture Research, Indian Institute of Soil Science, Nabibagh, Bhopal.MP, Coordinator Foreign Visitors of Asia to Bhopal at IISS, Manage Crops Production & Soils Management on farm Activities, Vice - President Buddhism Activities in Bhopal, Associate Buddhist Activity at Various Buddha Vihar of Bhopal, Supervise and Coordinate Visits to Sanchi Stupas complex and Sanchi Buddhist and Indic University other associated Buddhist places, Assist in National and International Seminars on Soil Science & Agriculture, time to time. Author of 2 Books in Buddhism Hindi (Under Publication). Founder Secretary New Siddharth Education and Health Service Society Bhopal, India.

Dr. Ashin Sopæka is a founder of Sōtaraṣo Meditation and Education Center in Myitkyina City, Kachin State in Myanmar. He has shared meditation and education with the people. He was born on 18-March- 1983 in Sagaing Division in Myanmar. At the age of 10, he started to learn monastic education called Buddhist texts till 2005 in many Buddhist education centers in Myanmar.

Having passed Dhammācariya examination in 2006, he has been conferred Sāsana dhajadhammācariya degree by the ministry of religious affairs. Then he was a teacher and taught the Buddhist literatures to the young monks and novices.

In 2009, he continued his education as higher level in the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University in Yangon. In 2010, he achieved Diploma (Buddha Dhamma), in 2012, BA (Buddha Dhamma). He continued his study in that University.

Dr. Suresh Kumar is presently working as Assistant Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda (Deemed University, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India). Earlier he served as Assistant Director (Research) in Indian Council of Historical Research- An autonomous organisation under Ministry of Education, Government of India. He had also been nominated a Member of State Advisory Board for the Development of Pahari Speaking People by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir (2014-18). In his academic endeavour, he has attended and presented papers in more than 67 national and international seminars/conferences in India and abroad so far and has the credit of publishing one book entitled Buddhist Ethics: Relevance and Impact on Contemporary Society and 27 Research papers in the journals of international repute. He has also in his credit the skill of organizing more than 55 seminars, conferences, workshops and camps of national and international level. He has done his PhD and Masters Degree in Buddhist Studies from University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Dr. Suresh is also associated with many academic and social organisations. He is well-known for his writings and speeches on the contemporary issues. He has good experience in the field of research, administration, teaching and journalism.

Venerable Ashin Suriya, a distinguished Buddhist monk and scholar, was born on October 1, 1976, in Ponnakar Village, Ye-U township, Myanmar. He received his higher ordination on March 1, 1996, and has since made significant contributions to Buddhist education and meditation practice. Fluent in Pāli, Myanmar, and English, he holds a Ph.D. in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Sanchi, India, and has earned postgraduate qualifications from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. His academic achievements include titles such as Sāsana dhajā Dhammācariya, Dīghanikāyavidu (Master of Long Discourses), and Vinayavidu (Master of Discipline). Venerable Ashin Suriya has authored numerous works on Buddhist philosophy and meditation, and his teachings emphasize the integration of Suttanta, Abhidhamma, and practical meditation methods. Currently, he serves as a meditation instructor at the International Mahasi Training School and lectures on Buddhist Psychotherapy at Sitagu University, Myanmar. With decades of experience in propagating Buddhism, his work has significantly influenced the promotion of mindfulness, moral discipline, and Buddhist psychotherapy across academic and spiritual communities. His dedication to nurturing inner peace and wisdom has established him as a leading figure in the field of Buddhist education and practice.

Dr. Susmita is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi. She has been teaching and guiding researcher in Buddhist studies since 2009. She did her masters in Buddhist Studies from Delhi University. She brings more than 14 years of teaching experience in the History of Buddhism. Her areas of specialization are Buddhist cultural, religious and political history as well as in Japanese Buddhism. She is also well versed in the Japanese language and has been to Japan as exchange fellow sponsored by Japan Foundation. Moreover, she is a Post-Doctoral Fellow of University Grant Commission. As a faculty in the Department of the Buddhist Studies, she has presented and published a number of research articles and papers published at various national and international conferences and Seminars. She has written two book based on Pali and Sanskrit poetics and has more than 20 research articles published in various national and international research journals

Ven Thich Tam Thien was born in 1970, entered the Buddhist monastic life in 1976. He was fully ordained by Grand Master Most. Ven. Thich Tri Quang at An Quang Temple in 1991. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in literature and journalism from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities in 1997. In 2000, he was invited by the U.S. State Department to come to the United States to participate in an international exchange program. While he was in the U.S., he was invited to give Dharma talks and lectures at a number of universities. A few years latter, he came to the US to continue his study at Community college in Los Angeles. Later, he was accepted to study at the University of the West where he had the opportunity to study and research with world famous professors, such as Lewis R. Lancaster, Bruce Long, Ananda W.P. Guruge. At this university, he also received a number of scholarships. In 2008, he graduated from this University with a Doctoral degree. In 2005, he establish the White Sands Buddhist Center in Mims, Florida, a famous monastery that has the four largest granite Buddhist statues in the State of Florida. In 2015, he travelled to Japan to study under the guidance of Grand Master Yoshimizu Daichi, a long-time friend of his Grand Master. In 2018, he returned to the United States and established the Thuong Hanh Monastery in McKinney Texas, where he is currently residing. He has authored numerous articles and published a dozen of books on a variety of Buddhist topics. In 2014, he became the first Buddhist monk to be invited to give a dharma lecture to a group of scientists and engineers at NASA – Kennedy Space Center.

Bhikkhuni Thích nữ Hạnh Thường - Le Thi Quynh (Buddhist name: Silatthita) is a scholar in Pāli and Buddhist Studies, currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pāli Language at Savitribai Phule Pune University, India. She holds a Master of Arts in Pāli Language from the same university, earned under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scholarship. Additionally, she has two Bachelor of Arts degrees in Buddhist Studies from the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (Myanmar) and Vietnam Buddhist University (Vietnam), as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Administrative Management from the National Academy of Public Administration, Vietnam. Fluent in Vietnamese, English, German,

and Traditional Chinese, with expertise in Pāli and Sanskrit, she has actively participated in international conferences, presenting research on topics such as Cittānupassanā in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Hadayavatthu in Abhidhamma, and Buddhist perspectives on creativity and consciousness. Her academic journey reflects a deep commitment to Buddhist studies, Pāli research, and cross-cultural Buddhist education.

Ven. Priyo Ranjan Tongchangya is a PhD Researcher in the Department of Buddhist Studies at the University of Calcutta. He completed his Bachelor of Buddha Dhamma and Master of Buddha Dhamma (Abhidhamma specialist) at International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar, from 2008 to 2014. After completing his studies in Myanmar, he went to Sri Lanka to pursue his Master of Philosophy in the Department of Buddhist Studies, Post Graduate Institute of Social Science and Humanities, University of Peradeniya, Kandy, Sri Lanka, in 2019. He also completed his Master of Buddhist Counselling at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, in 2021. While pursuing his academic studies, he presented papers in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Vietnam (Vesak, 2019), and India. His areas of interest are Buddhist culture, Buddhist psychology, and the social aspect of Buddhism.

Most Venerable Dr. Thich Duc Tuan (Anh Vo) taught by many most venerables from previous generations of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Most Venerable Dr. Thich Duc Tuan is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha since 1975, a chaplain since 1997, and a spiritual counselor since 2010. He possesses impressive multilingual proficiency languages and exemplifies humility, continuous learning, and dedication to advancing his knowledge and skills across various fields, including but not limited to Buddhism, Sociology, Psychology, cultural diversity, and social activities. In 1999, after obtaining multiple advanced Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Japanese, and English certificates and a deep interest in Sociology and Psychology education, he attended San Jose State University. He earned a B.A. in Sociology in 2005. During this time, he worked as a chaplain at the Regional Medical Center of San Jose and as a case manager at the John XXIII Senior Center in San Jose, California. In 2010, Most Venerable Dr. Thich Duc Tuan earned a Master's in counseling and education. Since then, he has worked as a spiritual counselor for end-stage cancer patients throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and attended Buddhist events and rituals across Asia and Europe. In 2023, he achieved his Doctorate of Psychology at California Southern University and has been sharing his profound knowledge and insights worldwide. Most Venerable Dr. Thich Duc Tuan is a Member of the Central Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Executive Council and Deputy Chair of the National Department of International Buddhist Affairs. In 2024, he becomes Member of Central Vietnam Fatherland Front and lives at Vinh Nghiem Pagoda, 339 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia St. District 3, Hochiminh City, Vietnam. His phone number is 0865122068.

Ms. Boudh Vandna (born in 1997, graduated in 2017 with B.Sc (Mathematics)) is Founder/ Managing Director: Enlighten World Financial

Literacy Program to raise the economic status of Ambedkarite Buddhists. Founder/ Director Mata Ramai Gruha Udyog. An initiative for women in the Buddhist community to become self-reliant. Director Gujarat Chapter: Buddha Light International Association Through this, continuous efforts are being made to propagate the Buddha Dhamma across the country as well as to inculcate the ideal Buddhist culture. Ashoka Green Valley Dholera SIR Gujarat Project to create the first ideal colony of Ambedkarite Buddhists in India for 1000 houses. Managing Director: MODLIVA MODULAR FURNITURE To provide Ambedkaraid Buddhist theme based home, office, interior & design in affordable price Area of Interests Social economic of Dr B R Ambedka, Culture Revolution in Buddhism, Buddhist literature, financial welfar of Ambedkarite movement, social empowerment through financial Literacy.

Venerable Vicitta, a distinguished Theravāda Buddhist monk from Myanmar, has been ordained for 18 years and has devoted over three decades to the rigorous study of Buddhist teachings. Holding a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies, Venerable Vicitta has profoundly contributed to the understanding of meditation practice and philosophy, blending traditional Buddhist insights with contemporary applications. His academic journey includes a Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies and a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Āyurvedic Psychiatry and Counseling, earned at esteemed institutions such as the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. His research focuses on the intersection of meditation, Buddhist philosophy, and mental health, showcasing the relevance of Buddhist wisdom in addressing modern challenges. Venerable Vicitta's influence extends across academic and spiritual communities, establishing him as a leading figure in the promotion of Buddhist education and practice.

Ven. Ashin Virānanda (Djong Heroe Surya) was born on July 20, 1983, in Indonesia. He was ordained as a monk on July 26, 2010, at the Nirodharama Meditation Center in Malaysia. Committed to deepening his understanding of Buddhist teachings, he pursued higher education at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) in Yangon, Myanmar, earning a Diploma in Buddha Dhamma in 2018 and a Bachelor of Arts in Buddha Dhamma in 2022. He is currently working on his Master's thesis, further contributing to Buddhist studies. Beyond academia, Ven. Ashin Virānanda is actively engaged in missionary work and spiritual leadership. He founded the Vihara Cycloop Dhammajaya Sentani monastery in Jayapura, Indonesia, and serves as the Spiritual Director of the Nirodharama Bukit Emas Vipassana Meditation Center in Batam, Indonesia. His teachings encompass Buddhist literature and meditation, guiding novice monastics (sāmaṇera) and leading youth retreats in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Taiwan. His dedication to Buddhist education has earned him invitations as a speaker at major events, including government-organized Vesak Day celebrations in Sambas, Indonesia, and as a Dhamma speaker on TVRI Jayapura. As a resident monk and spiritual advisor at the Nekkhamma Forest Meditation Centre in Indonesia, Ven. Ashin Virānanda continues to cultivate wisdom and compassion through his teachings and mentorship.

Ven. Kirama Wimalathissa is Buddhist monk who is capable of accomplishing any undertaking satisfactorily under given circumstances and willing to do team work. He has acquired considerable work experience in different fields. Having conducted field surveys, and research, he is confident that, they will be a veritable advantage in the process of performing diverse academic tasks in the field of Buddhist Studies and Pāli. He is a duty-conscious personality, has punctuality, and keen interest in top-quality outputs.

Ven. Kirama Wimalathissa has been a senior lecturer at the Department of Buddhist & Pali Studies, the Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka from 2012 to date. He entered the University of Peradeniya in 2003 and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 2007 with first-class honors and his major was Buddhist Studies. He completed his Master of Philosophy degree at the same University in 2012. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD degree in the same University. Ven. Kirama Wimalathissa is currently serving as Head, of the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies at Bhikus University of Sri Lanka.

Ven. Prof. Dr. Witharandeniye Chandasiri Thero is a distinguished Theravada Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka, celebrated for his academic accomplishments and unwavering commitment to Buddhist scholarship. In 2003, he earned the prestigious Royal Pundit degree, marking the beginning of his academic journey. After completing his Advanced levels, he pursued a Bachelor of Arts as an external student at the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. He went on to earn a B.A. special degree in Pali with first-class honors from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in 2008. Further enhancing his academic profile, He obtained diplomas in English and Computer Studies. He then completed three M.A. degrees in Pali and Buddhist Studies from the University of Kelaniya. Additionally, he holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the University of Colombo and was awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in 2014. His academic career began in 2011 as a temporary tutor at the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies. He became a permanent lecturer at the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka in 2014, eventually rising to Senior Lecturer and Professor at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Currently, he is undertaking postdoctoral research in Pali at Savitribai Phule Pune University, India.

Venerable Shi Xian Xing became a Buddhist nun in 2009. In 2011, she obtained a higher ordination from the Chung Tai Chan Monastery in Taiwan. She is pursuing her doctoral degree at the University of Malaya now. Her PhD research focuses on the history and current issues of the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. She holds a Bachelor of Sciences (Honours) from the University of Science Malaysia, majoring in Chemistry and minoring in Psychology. She also graduated with a Diploma in Buddhist Studies from the Malaysian Buddhist Institute. After that, she obtained a Master of Buddhist Studies and a Master of Arts from the University of Hong Kong and Australia Nan Tien Institute, respectively. She also holds the position of Secretary of the Malaysian Buddhist Culture and Arts Association and Treasurer of Qiyyuan Evergreen Care.

Dr. Rajnarayan Yadav is a distinguished scholar in Buddhist Studies,

holding a master's and MPhil in Buddhist Studies from Delhi University, with his MPhil research focusing on the impact of Buddhism on Japanese culture and civilization. He also holds a master's degree in History. Dr. Yadav earned his PhD in Zen Buddhism from the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi. His areas of specialization include East Asian Buddhism and Culture, Ancient Indian History and Culture, Japanese Buddhism, Mahāyāna Buddhist Philosophy, Abhidhamma Philosophy, and Buddhist Logic. Throughout his academic career, Dr. Yadav has actively participated in numerous seminars and workshops focusing on Buddhist culture and philosophy. His research papers have been published in several renowned publications, contributing significantly to the field. Currently, he is a post-doctoral fellow sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research at the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies, Arts Faculty, BHU, Varanasi. His current research focuses on "Bhavanagacitta and Alayavigyan in the Social Consciousness of Buddhism: A Psycho-Philosophical Study". He has knowledge of several languages like Hindi, Sanskrit, English, Japanese and several Indian languages. He has keen interest in Indian traditional culture and Ayurveda and naturopathy.

Ven. Shi, Sheng Ying is a Bhikshuni, educator, and scholar specializing in Chinese Tiantai Buddhism and Buddhist contemplative theory and practice. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Buddhist Arts at Huaan University, Taiwan. With a profound commitment to preserving and promoting Buddhism's cultural and artistic heritage, Ven. Sheng Ying integrates traditional contemplative practices with modern perspectives, offering students a comprehensive understanding of Buddhist principles, enriched by their historical, aesthetic, and practical significance. A distinguished expert in both theory and practice, Ven. Sheng Ying's scholarly focus encompasses Tiantai Buddhism, meditation practices, contemporary Buddhist temple management, and diverse forms of Buddhist art. Her research delves into the dynamic relationship between Buddhist philosophy and artistic expression, investigating how spiritual beliefs are reinterpreted in modern cultural contexts. Beyond her academic contributions, She is deeply engaged in workshops, exhibitions, and community outreach initiatives, fostering a broader appreciation for Buddhism's rich traditions. Her approachable teaching style and interdisciplinary approach inspire students to bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary artistic endeavors. As a cornerstone of the Department of Buddhist Arts, Ven. Sheng Ying plays a vital role in cultivating a meaningful dialogue between art, spirituality, and education at Huaan University.

Dr. Lye Ket Yong, a Malaysian-born polymath, exemplifies a harmonious blend of technical expertise, humanitarian commitment, and Buddhist scholarship. An accomplished aviation engineer with certifications from leading authorities such as UK-CAA and EASA, Dr. Lye's illustrious career spans senior roles at Boeing and Airbus delivery centers, where he mastered the complexities of aircraft delivery, maintenance, and performance optimization. Beyond his engineering pursuits, he has been a torchbearer of interfaith

collaboration and Buddhist leadership, earning accolades such as the Stockholm UN World Peace Award (2019) and the Outstanding Buddhist Leaders Award (2015). Co-authoring the insightful work 'Celebrating Tolerance: Religious Diversity in the UAE', he has demonstrated a unique ability to merge spiritual philosophy with societal imperatives. Dr. Lye's philanthropic initiatives, including co-founding Tam Ha Ambulance & Health Support Services in Vietnam and chairing Hands That Help Humanity, underline his dedication to alleviating human suffering. As Secretary General of the World Alliance of Buddhists and an academic leader at institutions in Myanmar and Malaysia, his dual doctorates in Buddhist Philosophy and Public Administration empower him to bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary challenges. His life's work radiates a profound commitment to fostering peace, advancing education, and uplifting communities worldwide.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Duc Thien obtained his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Delhi University in 2005, currently is Vice President-Secretary General of Executive Council of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS); Vice Chairman of Vietnam – India Friendship Association; Head of the Department of International Buddhist Affairs of VBS; Vice Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University in Hanoi; and Senior Lecturer of Vietnam National University, Hanoi (Tran Nhan Tong Academic Institute). He served as Secretary General of the 2014, 2019 and 2025 United Nations Day of Vesak in Vietnam. He has published, edited, and translated many books in Buddhist studies and history. He has received many prestigious recognitions from the Government of Vietnam (the Third-Class Labor Order), from the Royalty of Cambodia (the General Order), and from the Government of India (the Padma Shri Order).

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu obtained his D.Phil. in Philosophy from Allahabad University in 2002. He currently serves as the ongoing Vietnamese Tripitaka Translation Project and chief editor of the Buddhism Today Series (with over 250 published titles). A prolific author, he has written over 80 Vietnamese books on applied Buddhism. He has traveled extensively across Vietnam, Canada, the United States, Australia, and Europe to deliver public Dharma talks, and has produced more than 5,000 VCDs on various Dharma topics. Most Venerable Thich Nhat Tu is currently the Vice Rector of the Vietnam Buddhist University and Vice Chairman of the National Department of International Buddhist Affairs. Several universities have conferred upon him the honorary degree Doctor Honoris Causa in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Buddhist education, academic research, and international Buddhist leadership. He has also received numerous awards, titles, and honors from the governments of Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia.

